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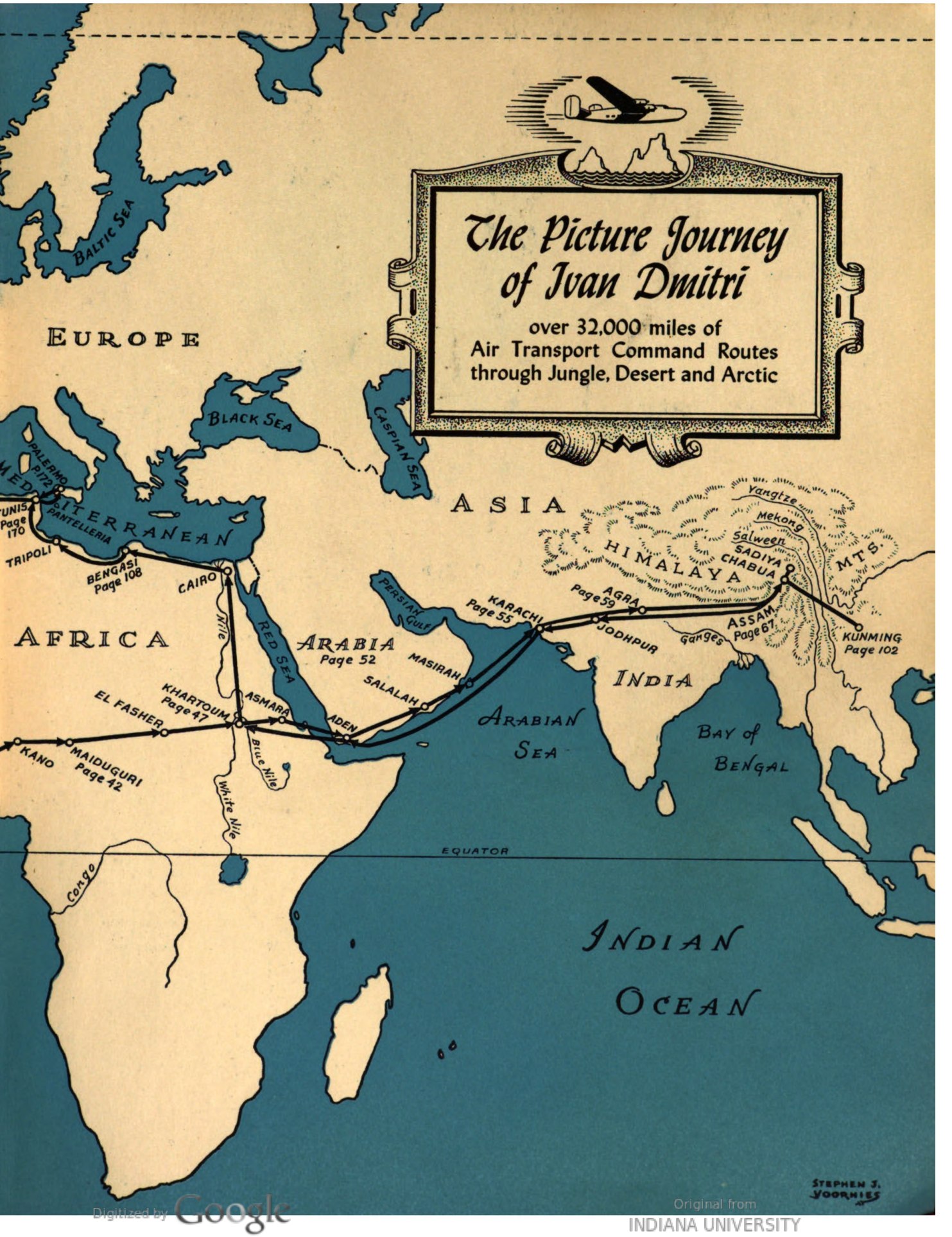
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MAJOR GENERAL HAROLD L. GEORGE
Commanding General, Air Transport Command, U. S. Army Air Forces

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I wish to dedicate this book to our men in the U. S. Armed Services. And though a separate volume for each man would be required to tell his full part in the war, I hope this will serve as a kind of diary recording for the men themselves such deeds as they accomplished and such activities as went on around them. Lord knows, they were far too busy or tired to do it for themselves. It is a small offering, awkward and unmasterful in its execution, but it has wonderful subject matter—heroes and the deeds of heroes. I wish I were more capable of doing it justice.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express his deep appreciation and gratitude for the generous help in the preparation of this book to the officers and men of the Army Air Transport Command, Maj. Gen. Harold L. George, Commanding; to Maj. Gen. C. R. Smith, Brig. Gen. Edward H. Alexander, Brig. Gen. Earl S. Hoag, Lt. Col. John C. Henry, and Maj. Irving Lashe; to Col. Curtis Mitchell and Maj. John T. Parker of the U. S. Army Bureau of Public Relations; to Col. Rex Smith; to Joseph W. G. Clark, Director in Chief, Public Relations Armed Forces of Canada; to Chairman T. M. Girdler and President Harry Woodhead of Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation; to John W. Hill of Hill and Knowlton; to James S. Thompson, President of McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.; to Ben Hibbs, Editor of the *Saturday Evening Post,* in which magazine a few of the pictures in this book have appeared; to Edwin F. Dakin, Editor of *Plane Talk;* to A. D. Rathbone IV; to Howard Stephenson; to Alexander Gardiner, Editor of *American Legion* magazine; to Clifford Stark, Editor of *En Guardia* magazine; to Nelson Rockefeller, Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs; to Ralph M. Beckwith; to Louis Dejonge; to Philip Ahrenhold; to Edward L. Smith; to Hy Needleman; and to Joseph F. Kalabza.

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I am glad that Ivan Dmitri has focused his famous lenses on some of the far flung operations of the Air Transport Command, Army Air Forces. This command deserves an enduring place in the annals of this war. Its accomplishments have been vitally instrumental in making our Air Forces' operations triumphantly possible. This is also an important record of the air fighting forces in the Mediterranean, Near East and Far East areas. The story and pictures are a valuable contribution to the understanding of America's heroic air accomplishments.

H. H. ARNOLD
General, U.S. Army
COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY AIR FORCES

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AT 5:30 ON A JUNE MORNING, twenty-eight fellow passengers and I, all in Army uniform, boarded an Air Transport Command plane at Miami airport, bound for war zones. If there was uneasiness in their midst, they were not revealing it. When I mention that one or two qualms journeyed with us, I speak only of my own. Although German submarines were still prowling the Atlantic, I felt perfectly safe, knowing I would be far above them. And although I was heading for war sectors, my story and pictures would deal with behind-the-scenes activities and I expected no firsthand encounter with the enemy. So it was unreasonable, perhaps, that I should entertain even the slightest apprehension. Nevertheless, I was nervous, and more in an attempt to dispel my anxiety than anything else, I centered my interest on my traveling companions.

They were a perplexed lot of men for the most part, having no inkling of their destination. Instrument men, meteorologists, communications men, mechanics, and other technicians formed the group. Each had received intensive Army training in his specialty and now was on his way to dispose it, but not one man knew where.

That he was part of the extremely secret Project *X*, had been told to take clothing suitable for both arctic and tropical climates, and now held sealed orders to remain unread until after take-off, only served to heighten each man's curiosity.

Their earnest and justifiable wonderment tempered my own uncertainties; at least I knew where I was going, as well as what I was going to do. Before take-off seemed as good a time as any to go to the flight deck and make arrangements for future picture taking.

Clambering over equipment, musette bags, and other luggage, as well as one or two men reclining on the floor, I made my way forward, while the four engines of the plane continued to snarl and growl like a dog being held from a fight.

Capt. Charles Fredericks was at the controls, Copilot R. J. Major standing by, and Engineer A. D. Duncan at the gas throttle. I liked them instantly. I have a bad habit that asserts itself whenever I am about to venture on a special as-

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ATC'S PLANES, HIGH OVER THE CARIBBEAN, SUCCESSFULLY EVADED SUBMARINES' FIRE

signment of any distance. I go forward just as I was then doing, meet the crew, and decide whether they are brash and reckless or restrained and calm. Then I return to my place to fret and stew in the first eventuality, or to relax and enjoy myself in the second. It is a futile test, proving nothing. Almost everyone has seen men outwardly calm and seasoned go to shivers during an emergency, while those untried take over without fuss.

Chick Fredericks was a pilot cut to order. He had made forty-eight round-trip flights over the South Atlantic and four trips to and from the famous China Hump, and had flown Generals Arnold and Marshall to the Casablanca conference.

I had previously explained my mission and now warned them of the nuisance I should sometimes have to make of myself, scuttling about with camera and flash equipment. They assured me they had put up with worse now and then. When it was time for the take-off, I returned to my bucket seat.

One of the puzzled boys, mistaking me for a crew member, asked where we were heading. Being uncertain of what I could safely tell him, I shrugged my shoulders and suggested that he would be reading his orders shortly.

Now we began to roll. Imperceptibly the wheels left the ground and we were in the air and started on the first leg of our flight to the Old World where so many new things were taking place.

There was great ado as the men opened their envelopes, a moment of silence as they read, and then groans and the exchange of many questions. "Where the hell is Chabua?" "Did your orders say what the project is?" "Mine just says to report to the CO at Chabua for further instructions!"

Each order was identical, and the men were as confused as ever. I had been cramming on geography for weeks in preparation for my trip, but, because it was such a long distance from home, I hesitated to tell them about the tiny spot in the northeasternmost finger of Assam, province of India — a town important only because it was the last stopping-off place

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before China, and rarely to be found on a map.

I have a kid brother who was stationed there, a sergeant. He had described it most unfavorably in his letters. But I could not tell these men that the spot toward which they were flying was probably the least popular of all army posts.

Project *X*, however, was as much a mystery to me as it was to the soldiers. Not even men who were taking actual part in the development of Project *X* knew the whole story. But the village of Chabua with its airport and the successful unfolding of the then obscure plans of the project were to become inextricably commingled for more than a year before the story could come out. When it was told over the radio and in the newspapers America and the world learned that Project *X* involved building bases for the future bombing of Japan. But all that was yet to be discovered.

Their relief upon learning their destination and the prospect of seeing something of India heightened the boys' spirits amazingly. Now there was a lot of buffoonery about learning the Indian rope trick and about who would be first to sleep on a bed of spikes or swim in the pools of the Taj Mahal.

They had yet to learn that India was more than these. The monsoon season was on, when winds blow constantly out of the southwest from the latter part of April to the middle of October. During the height of this season, it rains almost continuously, the annual fall reaching as much as 400 inches. Such were the climatic conditions under which these Army-trained technicians would undertake to build bases so that supplies could be flown over the Hump—that towering mass of jagged Himalayas, separating northeast India from China. Many planes have been lost without a trace while penetrating these heights. Blizzards at 20,000 feet have engulfed numerous four-motored ships. Crews lost, and knowing their fate, have been heard over the short-wave radio, singing before they crashed to their death.



AA'S CAPT. JOHN S. PRICER AND FIRST OFFICER MURRAY S. FREEMAN NOW FLY ATC



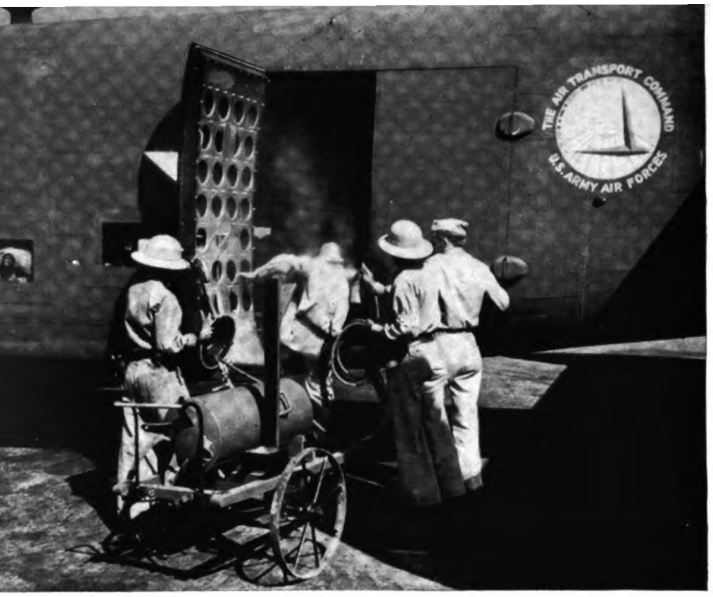
TWA'S FREDERICKS FLEW GENERALS MARSHALL AND ARNOLD TO CASABLANCA CONFERENCE

At four the next morning after a stopover at Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico, we were routed out in bright moonlight. After an excellent

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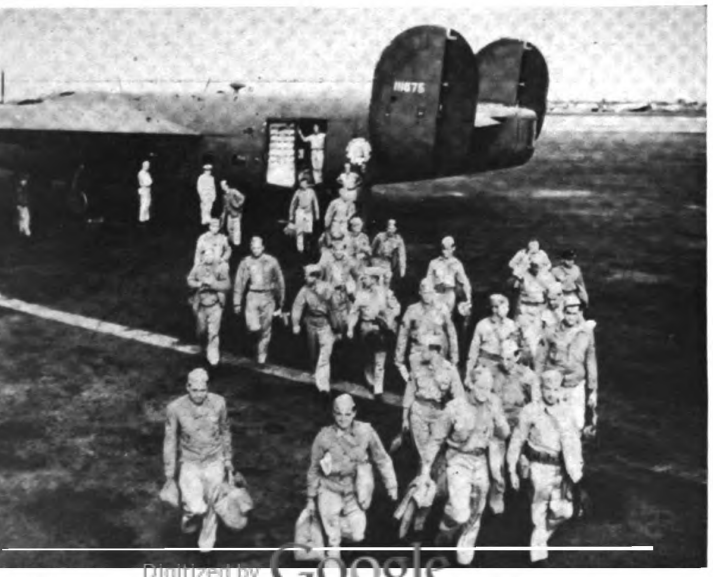
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Brazilian malaria patrol meets all planes; sprays interior of ship, cargo, and passengers, who must remain 10 minutes before alighting.



Liberator load of Army specialists alights at Natal for brief rest before continuing flight to Assam via central Africa and Arabia.



breakfast, we took off at six o'clock. We made the 1,058 miles to Georgetown, British Guiana, in time for lunch. Then off again, over the coastal plains and the jungle country, at times encountering tropical "fronts" at 10,000 feet, or descending rapidly to as low as 3,000 feet to avoid storms, or flying boldly through others. Jungle steam was seen rising like the smoke from great forest fires. Late that afternoon we crossed high over the Amazon and I recalled that five years previously I had journeyed to the headwaters of this river, in the Perene Valley, in Peru. A full moon was rising as we flew across the equator, and shortly we came down on the field near Belém, Brazil, an airstrip carved out of the jungle.

At dinner that night one of our companions told us about a humorous misadventure of his. He had dropped his musette bag beside the plane and walked off a short distance to greet some friends. An inquisitive baboon had approached from the nearby jungle, grabbed the musette bag, and made off with it. The light-fingered animal was chased into the fringe of the jungle, where it took refuge high in a tree, chattering wildly and clutching the bag. At dinner there was considerable speculation as to what use a baboon would make of a sewing kit, a toothbrush, and various other toilet articles.

The pilots and crews of the ATC transport planes lead a solitary existence. There is little to occupy them at the stops en route and this tends to mold them into a group that talks little and thinks much. Flight engineers must be at their planes two hours before take-off and also after landing to see that everything mechanical is in working order. They are never finished with the ceaseless shuttling of vital cargo and specialized personnel. They have built up remarkable endurance and speak very casually of 1,000-mile distances between bases. Scarcely had we reached Natal, end of their shuttle, before our crew was headed back to the states.

Natal, Brazil

We arrived at Panamarin Field, Natal, at three o'clock in the morning, after a 1,000-mile

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night flight from Belém. The malaria patrol kept us in the plane while they sprayed us thoroughly with disinfectant. Passengers, crew and baggage, as well as the inside of the plane, were systematically and efficiently sprayed. We were told to remain in the plane 10 minutes with the plane door closed before alighting. This routine prevails throughout the tropics.

Although substantial and comfortable barracks and accommodations had been built for the men of the armed forces permanently stationed at Natal, the constant influx of a growing number of transients brought about a difficult housing problem. To overcome it the Army erected a small city of tents, with mess and washing facilities.

Throughout the days and nights, work is carried on at Natal's airport, as at all other ATC ports throughout the world. The statistics border on the fantastic. On its third anniversary, May, 1944, ATC's original two officers had increased to 20,000; the initial staff of four enlisted men had become a force of 88,000; from one clerk at the beginning had grown a force of 20,000 civilian employees on the domestic staff alone. During March of 1944, ATC flew 29,000,000 miles ferrying military aircraft; in March of the same year, it flew 20,000,000 miles in transport service, most of it abroad, and delivered 60,000 persons to strategic destinations. The regular air routes in the United States and abroad had mounted to an all-time high of 160,000 miles—more than six times around the world—and all this in but three brief, hectic years.

These and other achievements came about only because of dangerous pioneering operations; as a product of painful and accumulated hard work and the sweat of thousands of men, and many women too, laboring in stifling deserts, in steaming tropical jungles, in Arctic wastes, in headquarters, or in domestic and faraway dispatching stations. Men on survey flights took unbelievable risks, and sometimes failed to return. Others, on engineering and construction projects, braved mountain tops and raging torrents, ventured where white men seldom have been seen. In building ATC's giant organization



Mosquito nets are issued to every soldier in malaria areas. They are suspended from T-bars; upon retiring, edges are carefully tucked in.



Tent city at Natal air base houses a steady flow of transients. (*below*) Hot water is provided by outdoor, wood-burning furnaces.



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Brig. Gen. Robert L. Walsh (*right*), CO of ATC's So. Atlantic Wing, and officers enjoy tropical fare. (*below*) Waitresses at officers' mess.



Natal's mosquito boots, costing but $5 per pair, set style standard; so popular they are worn thousands of miles from malaria belts.



from scratch, the aid of commercial companies, such as airlines, oil companies, aircraft manufacturers, and countless other firms, was vital, and always such aid and cooperation were given without stint or limit.

Originally charged with the delivery of military aircraft to other countries fighting for democracy before the United States entered the war, the responsibilities of ATC multiplied many times after Pearl Harbor. Some of the new tasks involved transporting troops to forward bases; moving a complete field hospital to Alaska in 36 hours; flying untold thousands of tons of cargo over the Hump into China; evacuating some 10,000 wounded from overseas to the states in the first seven months of 1944; transporting bombs and ammunition in emergencies; delivering V-mail, blood plasma, and medical supplies; carrying needed parts for aircraft, tanks, ships, and submarines to distant places; getting a rush shipment of grenades to Guadalcanal where they were needed desperately; then returning to America with many materials vital to war production, such as block mica from India, rubber seeds from Liberia, tin and tungsten from China.

There was no question as to whether these things could be done. They had to be done. Weather and communications stations were established in lonely outposts. Sometimes men were dumped on isolated and rocky shores and supplied by parachute. Airports had to be constructed under the nose of the enemy. A thousand other impossibilities became actualities, and today, Natal is but one of many efficiently conducted airports throughout the world that have come into being because of ATC's achievement in organizing itself to one objective—furthering the winning of the war.

Among the apparently endless necessities to be purchased for a wartime junket is a mosquito net. To save space, I had finally compromised on a head net. Then I worried for fear I had made a mistake in not buying one large enough to cover an Army cot. At Natal, however, as at other Army bases visited, I found the most thorough precautions being taken against the mosquito and other insects.

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HUGE FOUR-ENGINED LIBERATOR EXPRESSES RECEIVE A THOROUGH CHECK-UP BY MAINTENANCE CREWS BEFORE THE LONG HOP EASTWARD OVER THE ATLANTIC

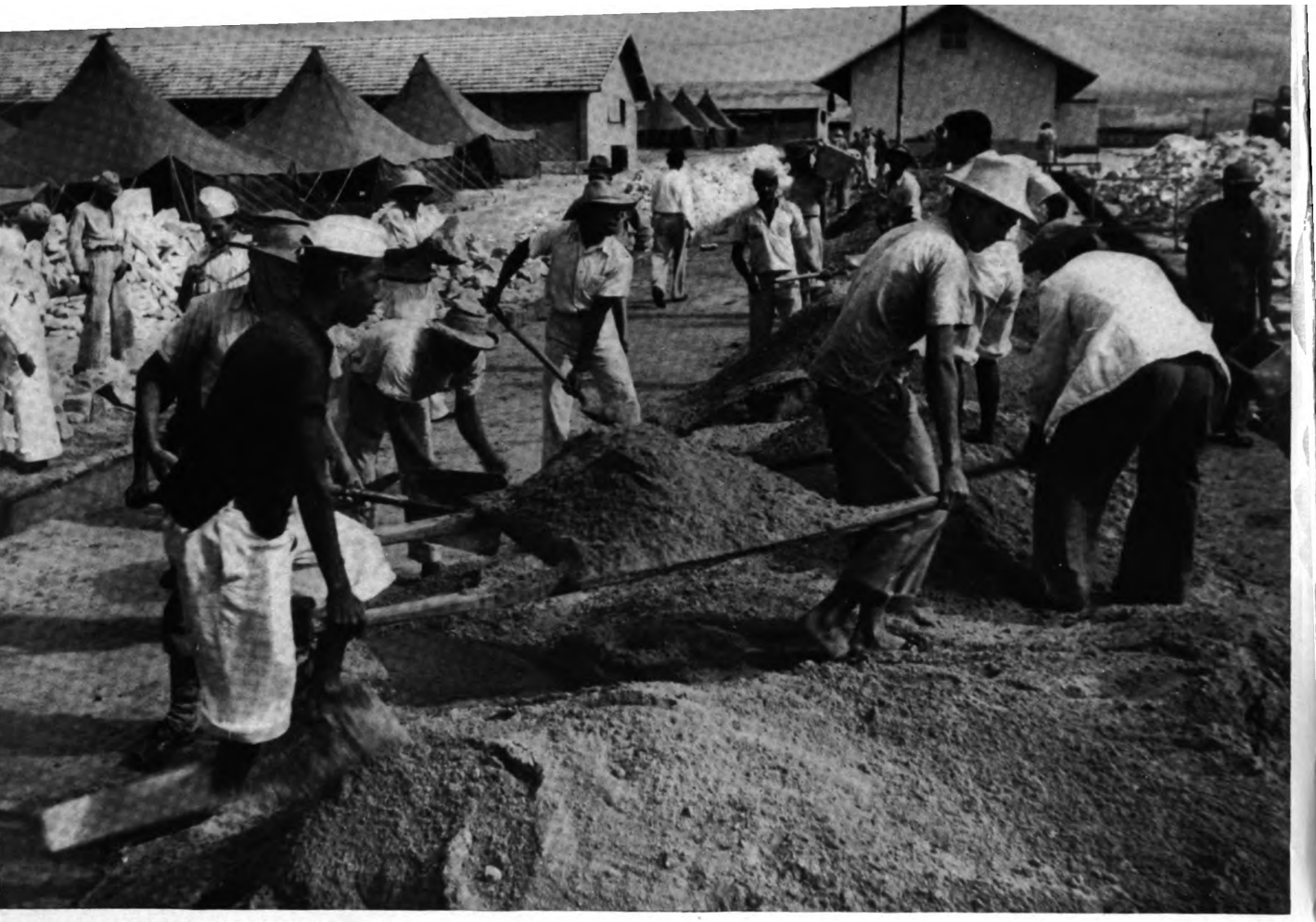
But a mosquito net is just one of the problems facing the prospective nonmilitary traveler, particularly if he journeys by air. There's the vital matter of obtaining a priority number, and contrary to an I. Q. rating, a high number decreases one's chances of getting anywhere.

While that is being determined, the civilian traveler must go about getting a passport, as in peacetime, as well as a visa for each country to be visited. Clothing is also a problem because the few people who can give advice on the subject frequently fail to agree, no doubt because of their varying experiences. One initiated traveler advised six shirts, another insisted upon twenty; I compromised with ten, and six changes of underwear and socks, as well as two neckties, two pairs of regulation Army cotton work pants and, for Sunday best, the usual tropical worsted uniform worn by correspondents. A pilot reminded me to take plenty of atabrine or quinine, and when passing through Natal, to buy a pair of mosquito boots. Nearly everybody trekking eastward through the gateway of Natal invests about five dollars in these Brazilian-made mosquito boots; once out of the Western Hemisphere, they are hard to find. Bright orange and about 9 inches high, they have a strap across the instep. Many of the boys tuck the bottoms of their trousers into the tops of the boots, cowboy-fashion, a habit which is extremely annoying to the more fastidious officers.

Another thing the prospective civilian traveler

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Good neighbor long before her declaration of war on Germany, los Estados Unidos de Brazil provided workers for Air Transport Command's installations. (*below*) Brazilian labor. ATC employs a great many native laborers at its bases throughout the world.

learns these war days is that he is not permitted to leave the United States until he has taken certain protective health measures. He must be immunized against smallpox and typhoid-paratyphoid, requiring three shots over a period of 14 days. Tetanus requires another three shots over a 42-day period. If the traveler's destination is Africa, he gets an inoculation for yellow fever; if he plans to visit Asia or the East Indies, he'll get two shots to protect him against cholera. In some instances, replenishing shots are required every 6 months. The dates and types of immunization are marked on a little card that must be carried at all times. If it is lost the whole business must start again, a calamity that has befallen more than one.



Civilian travel is anything and everything but the nonchalant, easygoing procedure it was in prewar days. Instead of expensive hotels or pensions, you will sleep and eat at Army bases. It can be accomplished at little cost other than the series of negotiations, investigations impugning you as prospective saboteur, vaccinations, and clearances. Now, provided that your credentials

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Camouflaged for protection over ocean, these P-38's having just enough gas for Ascension flight, will be guided by ATC transports.

Old automobile tires are used to pack loose sandy soil of Natal into firm runways before the application of surfacing material.

are in order and that someone with a higher priority doesn't show up, you may board almost any plane with a vacant seat.

Your departure will be shrouded in secrecy. You will be told not to discuss with anyone either your destination or your possible date of departure. The last provision is easy enough to follow; you don't know the date yourself until just a few hours before take-off. Meanwhile you spend every possible moment waiting for the phone to ring. The suspense does not lend wings to the matters of winding up some business affairs, continuing with others, or, as in my own case, getting married. "Patience, patience," cautioned my bride-to-be, and after a time, I'm sure, as much to herself as to me.

When the message does come, it may be exasperatingly uninformative—instructions to proceed to a certain place which might be an airport or, as in my case, to another city adjacent to an airport, there to await a second call.

In any event, the call will come with startling suddenness. Heaven forbid that any prospective traveler should receive his call, as I did, three



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While on four-hour pass from base, ATC servicemen enjoy lovely pastel-hued, Portuguese architecture and Natal's tile sidewalks.





days after his wedding, in the midst of a honeymoon, and with packing still to be done back in New York. Of course, we had been expecting it, but after so long a wait, we had been hoping for at least another two weeks. Having no choice, we rushed back to the city, raced frantically about for last-minute purchases, my wife covering the stores in one direction, I those in another; back to the studio for packing; afterward a midnight safari of men and women streaming down from the fourteenth floor of the New York Central Building, each carrying one or more of my numerous pieces of baggage; some farewells and good wishes at the sidewalk, then with four self-elected members of a final bon voyage committee we raced down New York's deserted thoroughfares to Pennsylvania Station; more farewells, these a bit sadder, and then the train for the airport.

It was not before reaching Natal that I began to react normally to what was going on about

← **American soldiers** the world over satisfy longing for their own children by bestowing parental affection upon foreign youngsters.

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Cervesa fria on veranda of Natal's Grande Hotel. (*right*) Brazilian policeman escorts ATC personnel on sight-seeing tour of the city.



me. This quiet-paced city, a half hour's ride from the air base, offered a short respite from the feverish activity of the previous days. Here there is a daily siesta at noontime when businessmen go home and don pajamas. They follow the same comfortable custom in the evening when lounging about the house; the women, however, refrain from this informality.

There is swimming at the beach, where natives sell pineapples, bananas, watermelons, and fresh shrimps. In the town of Natal, the 42,000 residents mingle amicably with Brazilian, British, and American soldiers, sailors, and marines. Occasionally Military Police of one or more nations drop into the Wonder Club and the Ideal Club, two popular cosmopolitan gathering places, to quell minor disturbances, but on the whole the good-neighbor policy seems to be working out splendidly.

To insure good Brazilian-American relationship, lectures pertaining to the customs and



➔ **American Airlines' J. D. (Ted) Lewis** (*center, seated*) on wartime service with ATC, converses in "Portuguese" at sidewalk cafe.

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NATAL'S BEACH, IN EQUATORIAL MALARIA BELT, NOW CLEARED OF MOSQUITOES THROUGH UNTIRING EFFORTS OF BRAZILIAN-AMERICAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES

habits of the people of Brazil are given to newly-arrived officers and men, a wise and diplomatic precaution in view of the number of natives employed on the many construction projects.

It seems that all pilots of U. S. commercial airlines, functioning under Air Transport Command, show up at Natal sooner or later. I met several I had known when flying with airlines in the states, as well as a few with whom I had flown the previous winter in Labrador.

A CRANE AND A "HEAVE-HO!" — ANOTHER ENGINE — DESTINATION CHINA



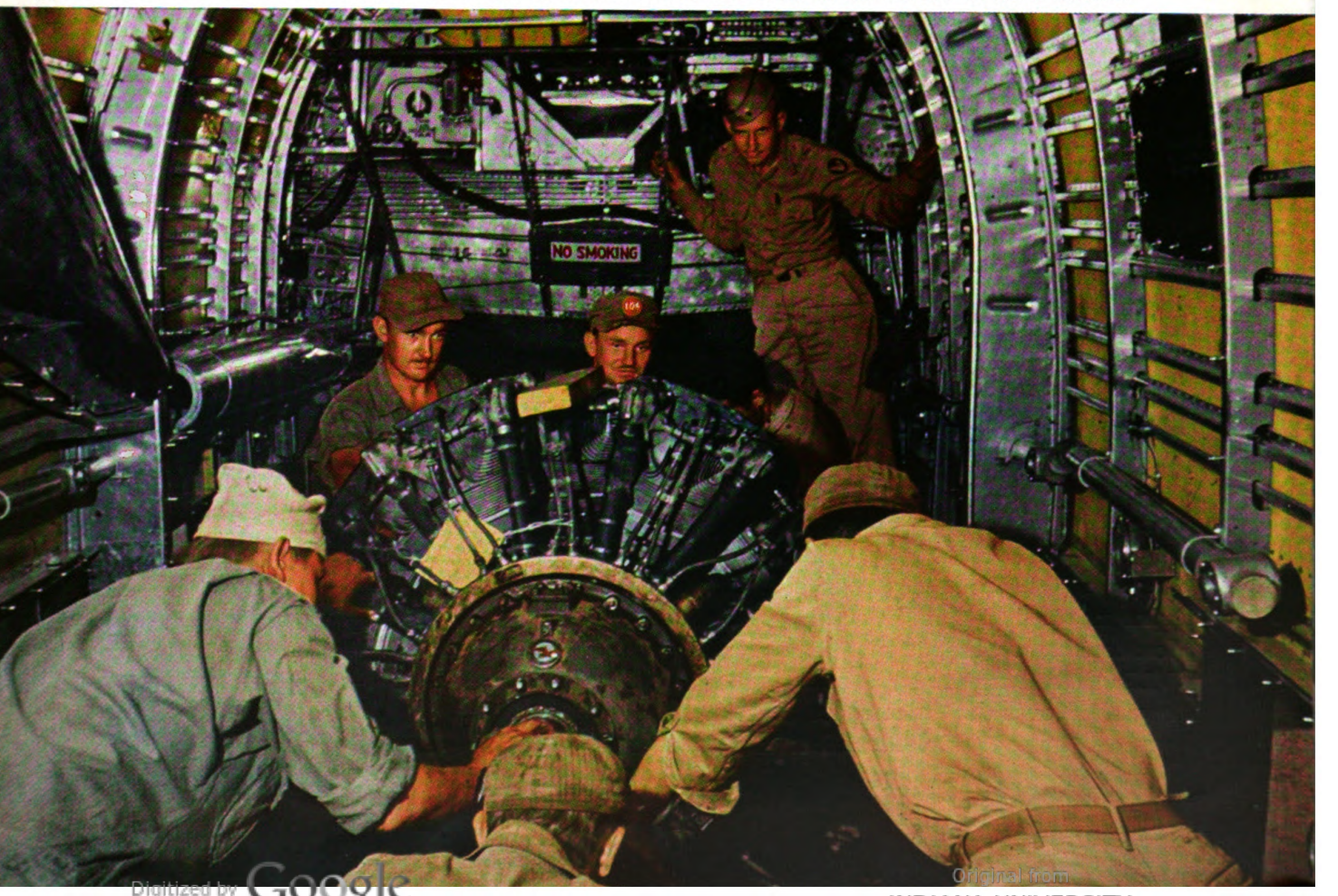
ATC maintains separate staffs from each line for the handling of clerical work, operation of planes, and the many other details. Keen competition exists between them, each striving for good records in safety, amount of freight carried, and number of planes in operation. Yet all function harmoniously under Army regulations and orders.

Because of its strategic importance in ATC's global route, many things had to be accomplished in a short time at Natal. One must marvel at the precision with which the base operates and at the continual stream of airplanes coming in and taking off. Huge cargo transports stream down from the north, others roar in from the Atlantic on return trips. This two-way traffic is always heavy, but so is the one-way traffic in fighter ships—always eastbound toward the fighting fronts. These combat planes are ferried south from the states, then over the Atlantic after a single stop for gasoline at Ascension Island. Each fighter ship carries a one-man crew—the pilot—and enough gas to get him to Ascension. To

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A NEVER-ENDING STREAM OF LIBERATOR EXPRESSES RUSHES REPLACEMENT ENGINES AND OTHER CRITICAL MATÉRIEL TO ALLIED THEATRES.



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Brig. Gen. Edward H. Alexander (*left*), CG of ATC's India-China Wing, pilots own C-87, often makes hurried flights to the States.

simplify the navigation problem, they travel in groups over the 1,450 miles of Atlantic to the island, each led by a C-87 Liberator Express or other transport carrying a navigator.

Natal is the jumping-off place on the South Atlantic flight to the Gold Coast of Africa. Thence the air route leads over Africa to Khartoum, in the lower Nile valley, then north to Cairo and the Middle East, or eastward to Aden, over the Indian Ocean to Karachi, western seaport of India, then on across India to Assam, the end of the line before the Hump.

When the time came to leave, I found I was scheduled to take my first flight in a C-87, the Consolidated Vultee B-24 bomber converted for passenger and freight service. It carries no armament, and while Nazi submarines were swarming in South Atlantic waters, the big ships often were caught within range of the antiaircraft guns mounted on the subs, and some planes were lost to these enemy patrols. However, when the VLR (very long range) bomber patrols were organized over the Atlantic for the purpose of wiping out the subs, the Liberator, with accounts to settle, was chosen for the work and had its revenge.

Ours was a night flight from Natal to Ascension. In addition to the crew there were twenty-five American pilots aboard, all bound for Chabua. The technicians with whom I had flown from Miami to Natal had continued their voyage without a stopover, and I would miss their companionship, but I found this new group imbued with the same verve and desire for new sights and new places as my former fellow travelers had been when once they learned their destination. At first, although baggage and men filled the plane to overflowing, they seemed not to mind the cramped quarters. But after flying a few hours, it turned miserably cold and there was a lot of scrambling and crawling of men over each other, making a fumbling search for winter flying gear. I wore my sweater and raincoat, huddled myself close among the others in a vain effort to generate warmth, but still I was too cold to sleep.

On a night flight, or even on a long and tiring one by day, sleep or rest aboard a personnel transport is to be obtained only by circumvention and sharp practice. Neither rank nor rating means anything to tired and weary bodies. When fatigue takes over, each one slyly, and at first imperceptibly, leans against his nearest neighbor, who, in turn, does the same to his neighbor. A story is told about a major general traveling in an overcrowded transport, who made himself as comfortable as possible on the floor of the plane and dozed off. The general awoke with an uncomfortable weight on his chest and, after probing in the darkness, discovered that a soldier with the insignia of a private first class had couched his head and arms snugly on the two-star chest and was snoozing peacefully as a babe in its mother's arms. Sympathetic to the circumstances, the general pushed the inert figure only very gently and said: "Pardon me, but you're napping in my face." The tired lad, ignorant of the high rank aboard, only sleepily rolled back to his position on the general's chest.

➔ **This war's aerial version** of last war's "40 and 8." ATC rushes thousands of specialized personnel wherever they are needed.

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"AIR IS EVERYWHERE." ACROSS THIS VAST EXPANSE OF SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN ATC HAS FERRIED THOUSANDS OF TRANSPORT, BOMBER, AND FIGHTER PLANES

Often there was nothing to eat aboard, and frequently no water. After just one foodless experience, the traveler provided himself with sandwiches, candy bars—if obtainable—and either a canteen of water or a bottle of some soft drink from the mess halls or PX's along the way. But nowadays, on all long flights, ATC carries box lunches and fruit juices as well as emergency rations.

When seats are provided, they are what is known as "bucket seats." These are a malicious variation of the cup-shaped resting place for man's posterior adorning the farmer's plow. Like a shallow wash basin lacking drain and faucets (though I'll wager the sadistic designer will pound his brow in rage for this oversight), they are of the most benumbing aluminum obtainable. In that scooped-out torture chamber must one pitilessly place his sensitive flesh and slither and squirm his way the entire distance of his flight, be it thousands of miles.

There are only two ways of sitting in or on one: There is the erect position, demanding an inclination of the head to prevent bumping the open ribs and stringers behind; or the bent-double position, with elbows resting on knees and chin in hands. There's no doubt about it, anyone who has occupied a bucket seat during a 12-hour hop

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NON-STOP FLIGHTS ARE ROUTINE, BUT REFUELING MIDWAY AT ASCENSION ISLAND PERMITS THE TRANSPORTATION OF GREATER LOADS OF CARGO

in a transport plane is entitled to at least a service bar of some sort, with a minimum of one Oak Leaf Cluster or, better yet, a Purple Heart.

Ascension Island

When dawn came, by twisting in my seat, I was able to peer through the small window to watch the limitless wastes of the Atlantic, as we approached our destination. Thanks to our excellent navigator, we sighted Ascension precisely at eight o'clock in the morning and floated down to a smooth landing, amid a cloud of terns. The plane-load of pilots with whom I had flown left as soon as their ship took on a new supply of gasoline, and they left me on this British-owned mite of lava rock, lying midway between the bulge of Africa and South America.

There is no point on the entire ATC route more salient than this 34-square-mile island. For its size, Ascension Island now rivals any place on earth in aerial tonnage handled. In March, 1942, a detachment of American Army engineers arrived and built a runway capable of accommodating the heavy ATC cargo planes. Within 91 days they had blasted, bulldozed, and chewed out a 6,700-foot landing strip. Then barracks, mess halls, machine shops, and numerous other

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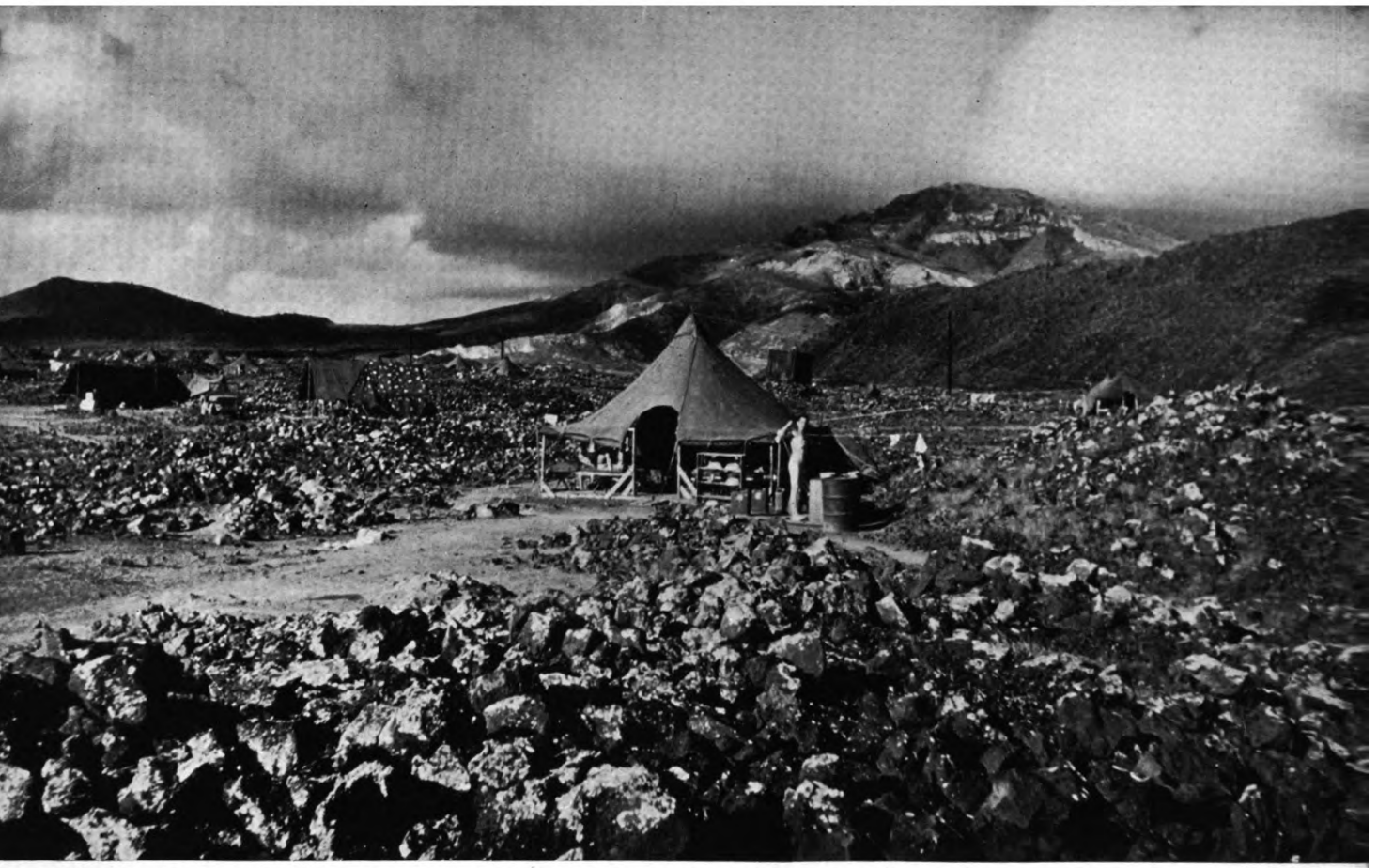
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Surveyors said of Ascension Island: "A crow would break his leg trying to land here." Engineers carved this runway from a ragged jumble of lava rock in 91 days. (*below*) "September Morn", Ascension Island. Weekly water ration was five gallons per man.



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Ascension's only vegetation grows on perpetually cloud-capped Green Mountain (*in distance*) which serves as landmark for pilots.

Despite construction activities and airplane traffic, huge colony of terns persists in maintaining nesting grounds at end of runway.



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Dummy antiaircraft batteries may deceive the enemy, but The Rock is amply protected by effective batteries which are concealed at strategic locations.



Colonel Mullinex and British Governor Tomlinson supervise artillery practice. (*below*) Sooty terns nest on the sand. within eighteen inches of each other.



buildings went up and some 2,000 Americans arrived to handle the air traffic.

The British governor of the island is Col. J. N. Tomlinson, whose headquarters are in the sole community, Georgetown. This village boasts a jail that has not had a single inmate since 1925. Politically, Ascension is under the government of St. Helena. The American Task Force is commanded by Col. John C. Mullinex of the Air Forces.

The strategic importance of Ascension demanded that every precaution be taken against a surprise attack by enemy submarines or sub-based planes. Before all the necessary protection could be supplied, it was necessary to employ subterfuge. At one location, for example, steel-helmeted gun crews stand on the ready, day and night, within protecting circles of sandbags. From the air or sea, they appear exceedingly alert and dangerous, but on close acquaintance, they prove to be dummies; even the gun is spurious. Needless to say, the protection of Ascension Island has not been left to dummies and imitation guns. The actual installations are entirely efficacious.

Ascension is one of nature's most densely populated bird havens. It is the home of countless thousands of terns, of the species known as Eastern Sooty Tern. They range in length from 15 to 17 inches and have a wingspread of about 34 inches. They feed almost entirely on small fish and are inedible, but the eggs, cooked in any fashion, are palatable. Noisy groups of the birds gather upon the rocks and when alarmed, they gracefully take wing, literally clouding the sky. Beau-

Ascension Island's *"wide awake birds"* noisily resent intruders—sometimes attack in defense of nests.

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HOME ON THE ROCK. MEN AT ONE OF WORLD'S LONELIEST BASES READ OR WRITE LETTERS TO THEIR FAMILIES. ALL FURNITURE BUT COTS IS HAND-MADE

tiful as they are, the terns are a hazard to the planes. The birds have been known to get in the way of the transports, and the impact is great enough to smash a window in the pilot's compartment, should they strike against it.

On all the 34 square miles of this barren island, there is no sign of vegetation except near the top of Green Mountain, a hill at the western end. The contrast between the shrubs and greenery of the mountain and the lava rock-strewn bleakness of the remainder of the island is strikingly incongruous. There is literally nothing but one struggling and defiant tree growing on that eerie spot which might have torn itself from Mars or sprung, Phoenix-like, from itself.

The name resulted from its discovery on Ascension Day in 1501 by the Portuguese, but it was so barren and worthless a spot that no other country desired it.

A small British naval force took over the island in 1815, without the slightest difficulty, there being no garrison to oppose it. It is one of the few spots in this world that has always been destitute of natives. To just what use Ascension could be put by the British in the early nineteenth century is hard to say, but when it came time to find a place for the deposed Napoleon to be permanently lodged, Ascension was given consideration. The proposal was finally rejected in favor of the island of St. Helena, some 800 miles away.

Some years later the Rock, as it is called by our Air Forces, achieved stategic importance during the laying of a South Atlantic cable and was leased to the English communications firm, Cable and Wireless, Ltd. Eventually it became a cable station and the lonesome home of about seventy-five Britons who, prior to this war were

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dependent on one ship a year for provisions, mail, and visitors.

Life on the Rock when the Americans first came was arduous and difficult. Every ounce of food except the tern eggs must still be brought in from outside; no gardening is possible. There is no water supply on the island, and at first the purifying machines which make sea water fit to drink were unable to supply more than 5 gallons a week per man. Swimming along much of the foaming coast of the island is dangerous because of sharp reefs, huge rolling combers, and tidal currents, so this 5-gallon supply had to do for bathing as well as drinking and laundering. The men on Ascension live in dispersed tents pitched on crude wooden platforms and the cans of water are carried to them by truck. The dearth of water has now been largely overcome; an increasing number of purifiers has advanced the allowance to 4 gallons a day per man.

Besides food, thousands of tons of aviation gasoline, oil, and spare parts must be shipped in. The transport planes, fighter ships, and other types of battle planes on their way to fighting fronts make Ascension their gas stop. Consequently supplies reach the island far more frequently than in former days. Though the Rock remains one of the loneliest places where American troops are serving, the morale of the boys stationed there is high. The men are called upon for a lot of hard work, but there remains plenty of time to eat, sleep, and play.

★ ★ ★

In the "Lucky 7", commanded by Captain G. M. McCabe, former American Airlines pilot, I flew from Ascension Island to the Gold Coast of Africa, 1,360 miles over the Atlantic.



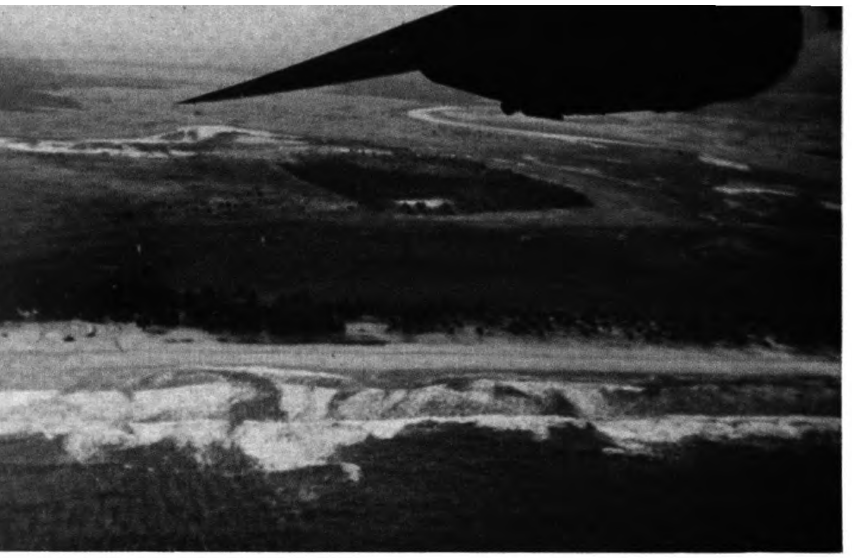
"The Sad Sac," of the 480th Antisubmarine Group, AAF. Men of this unit were cited by the President for excellent work in protecting supply lines to Sicily.



Navy Liberators helped clear Atlantic shipping lanes of Nazi U-boats. Patrol areas were enormously increased by utilization of these long-range bombers.



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The Gold Coast of Africa, 300 miles north of the equator. (*below*) Unofficial greeter at Accra Army Air Base was this wistful gentleman of the Dark Continent.



The Gold Coast

For the first time on my journey since leaving the States, I was the only passenger. Since again we flew at high altitude, it was cold in the plane and my sweater and raincoat insufficient to keep me warm — a strange incongruity, as we were so close to the equator. My one occupation, other than staring at the sea and cloud formations and reading the freight labels, was piecing together bits of Africana stored in my mind.

With our early morning start we sighted the African shore by 3:15 in the afternoon, and I had my first glimpse of the vivid-colored continent called "dark." It was raining and the huge rollers rhythmically sweeping the shores were the color of steel and the foam was a lackluster gray. In contrast, however, was the rain-washed verdure. How resplendently lush and green was Africa's bonnet—beplumed, velvety, and studded with rubies! These deeply colored gems dotted the entire landscape; I could not imagine what they would eventually prove to be.

Upon landing I sought out my mysterious rubies almost at once and was shocked at myself for having failed to surmise their substance. As a child almost the first thing I had learned about Africa from my book of geography was that there the ants built hills seven and eight feet tall. Their earthly appearance was unlike that from the air. Now they were miniature mountains, jagged, irregular, and variegated in color when seen from a distance, but solid-red earth when closely inspected.

The Army Air Base near Accra, the capital of the Gold Coast Colony, is another anthill of industry. The ani-

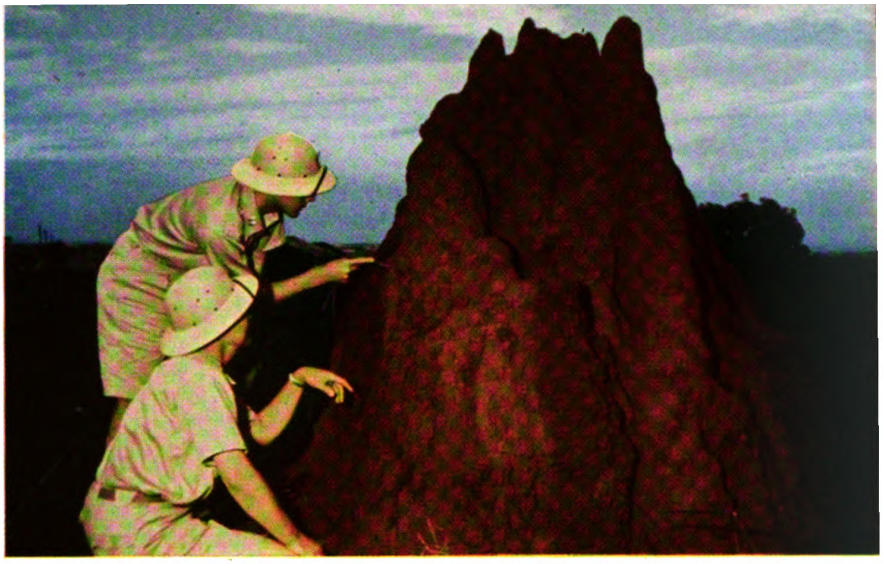
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mated atmosphere is evidenced first in the quick, efficient spraying of the passengers and cargo, then in the construction of modern additions to the airport, in the constant loading of transports, and finally, in the administration of the base itself.

The British Overseas Aviation Company arrived at Accra in 1937. In June, three years later, an American company entered the scene, and the following year the United States Army sent a control officer for a preliminary study of the area. In September, 1942, Brig. Gen. Shepler W. Fitzgerald, with an administration crew and a company of 225 men, arrived to initiate ATC operations. The base, now under the command of Brig. Gen. Earl S. Hoag and with British military protection, retains several thousand army men and 5,000 civilians for upkeep and maintenance.

There are 490 miles of narrow-gauge railway extending throughout the Gold Coast. Ten American lend-lease locomotives are utilized to bring vegetables, sugar cane, eggs, fowl, oranges, lemons, and avocados to Accra for native consumption, and palm oil, kola nuts, cocoa, and indiarubber for export. All this activity provokes an about-face in the opinions of American lads passing through Accra by the plane-load, opinions hitherto formed by the chronicles of writers who limit their descriptions of Africa to big game hunting and safaris of explorers penetrating pygmy or gorilla country.

My stopover at Accra occurred during the height of the rainy season. The constant wet weather provokes malaria and necessitates daily spraying of the swampy pools with kerosene and crude oil. Here mosquito boots are regulation; I noticed that even the nurses in the hospital wore high boots



Ant hills of enormous size dot the country around Accra. The name of this capital city of the Gold Coast was derived from the native word meaning "ant."



ATC employs great numbers of native workmen. (*below*) Discarded American tin cans make prized lunch boxes, contain *fufa*, national dish of ground wild root.



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After eight minutes of fumigation in stifling cabin, arrivals welcome even the heat and humidity of rainy season. (*below*) Smartly clad in ATC uniforms of shirts and shorts, native "Red Caps" are plentiful, participate eagerly in strange and modern air activities.



of white canvas. Every precaution is maintained, with the result that malaria is now almost nonexistent.

In Accra, as well as throughout Africa, the annoyance of luggage is absent. Upon leaving the plane, we were surrounded by so many blacks that I had the services of six porters, one to carry each of my bags. Following the advice of the orderly I tipped the "boss boy" the magnificent sum of 15 cents.

Most of the nearly four and one-half million people living in the Gold Coast Colony are very, very black and, oddly enough, really do speak with an English accent.

At the airport terminal building I was assigned to a billet, a room in a sizable barracks built of concrete. There were a generous screened porch and screen-covered windows, all very modern after the tent city of Natal. The abundance of help is not limited to porters in Accra; there is also a plethora of help for service at the mess hall, as well as numerous houseboys. The latter provide laundry and tailoring within a few hours. Yes, in Africa, the GI's life is free of many pesky duties, including KP.

The newly arrived serviceman at Accra is

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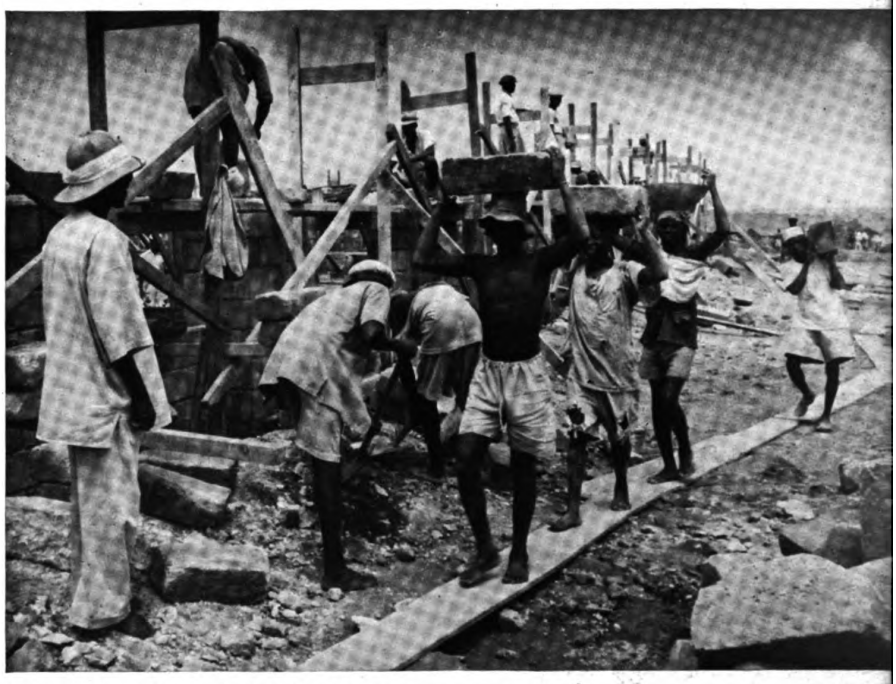
early instructed in the history and customs of the country. He learns that smiles and courtesy win the cooperation of the natives, that they enjoy saluting the officers, and that generally they are constant but slow workers. They are avid bathers. At any hour of the day, the kitchen help and houseboys can be seen through the barracks windows, globules of white soapsuds streaming over their black bodies. They rinse by pouring buckets of water over their heads. The clearing of throats and the blowing of noses are thought indelicate and are always performed in seclusion. Paradoxically, the open sewers of the town are used unashamedly, before one and all, for purposes that we consider the most private of all.

Thousands of native workmen are engaged on construction projects. Like builders of ancient times, they carry blocks of stone on their heads. They perform prodigious feats in leveling airfields and preparing foundations. Hundreds of workers swarm over a project, the completion of which is accomplished by main force of these numbers. In much of the work involving the transportation of dirt or rocks, large metal pans or basins somewhat like huge salad bowls are employed. After being filled, these also are carried atop the head.

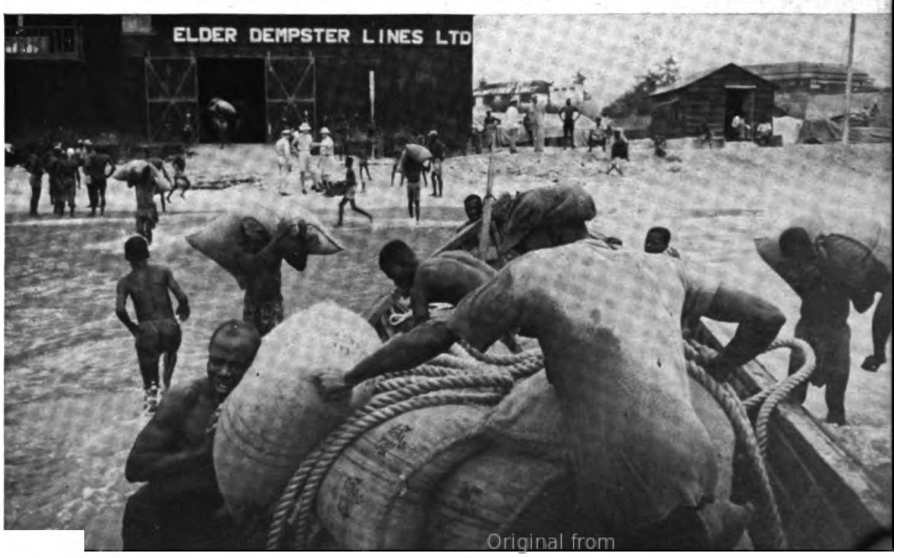
Accompanied by Maj. Wayne E. Scott and Capt. LeRoy B. Wilson, I went on a photographic mission the day after my arrival. We took numerous pictures of the natives at work at the air base. Usually they persisted in gazing directly into the camera despite everything that our driver-interpreter could do. Our driver's name was I-Say-You-Do. When we wanted action, Mr. I-Say-You-Do would chatter to the boss man, emphasizing with



↑ **Five o'clock line-up** at end of day's work. Army trucks carry laborers from base to city. (*below*) Modern installations built with ancient construction methods.



↓ **Cocoa—Gold Coast's leading export.** 144-pound bags from warehouse, to surf boat, to freighter which is anchored mile and a half beyond barrier reefs.



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Gold Coast Military Police play African checkers with pebbles on sand. (*below*) G-strings identify baby girls; boys wear loin cloths.



what I suppose were appropriate gestures. Then the boss man would pass the instruction on to his crew and finish by hollering an exclamation that sounded like "Eye-gee!" I never did learn its meaning, but it proved most effective, for all the natives immediately set to work with a great show of effort. They were like children on a holiday and seemed to enjoy being photographed as well as being the center of attraction. They are paid about twelve dollars a month, in American money, for their work.

They have an inherent and abiding temptation to walk off with tools and other objects. Every night after finishing their work, they must be frisked while lined up near the ramp, waiting for trucks to take them back to town. They are fascinated by the strange and wonderful assortment of gadgets with which the white man so profusely surrounds himself. They cannot resist appropriating what to them are entirely useless articles, such as a bolt, a wrench, or even a carburetor. These things appeal to them aesthetically; they take them with no idea of profiting by their possession, but only to handle them and gaze upon their mysterious and awesome splendor.

In striking contrast to the efficiency displayed at the base is the age-old method of loading ships with the exports of the country by means of surf boats. Along the seacoast where the boats are loaded, a constant line of husky black men bearing 144-pound bags of cocoa moves from the warehouses out to surf boats. There the bags are lashed down for a haul of a mile and a half to the waiting freighters, anchored beyond the reefs. Half the world's supply of cocoa comes from the Gold Coast.

Each of the surf boats, about 30 feet long, is manned by twelve powerful oarsmen and a rudder man. Each oarsman wields a long paddle having a peculiar three-pronged blade. As the boat is propelled, or rather jolted and jerked, through the water, the paddlers keep time with a weird African chant.

We visited Sir Alan Burns, B.W.A., K.C.C.B., Governor General of the Gold Coast. He resides in one of the many historic forts built during the

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Accra's waterfront swarms with hundreds of natives upon arrival of freighter anchored outside reefs. All hands (13 including coxswain) are needed to float loaded surf boat. On return trip, to rhythm of weird tribal chants, paddlers race boats back to shore.



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Hordes of loudly chattering marketers meet morning train from northern produce country, wearing vivid Mother Hubbards, vie for choicest meats and vegetables.



At the market, transient ATC servicemen, guided by Major Wayne Scott (*right*), watch native bargaining. Here also are purchased souvenirs of leather and gold.



castle-building era. The dungeons in which slaves once were held still remain as a gruesome reminder of the days when men were treated with more brutality than beasts.

To our delight, he served us American beer. We inquired about the Gold Coast elephants and were sorry to learn that only eighty of the great beasts remained of the once large herd providing such an abundance of ivory; they have been decimated by white and native hunters alike. The few left are now protected by the government.

Sir Alan showed us his aviary, which contained riotous-colored parrots and other tropical birds, including a weaverbird.

In the gubernatorial dining room was a punkah, a fanning device which has become known to many of the American lads serving in India and Africa. It is a wooden frame covered with cloth and suspended from the ceiling. It is kept in motion, backward and forward, with constant pulling on an attached rope by a houseboy. Familiar enough to the army men from our own South, where some are still in use, the punkah is intriguing to others.

After thanking our host, we departed and visited the native market in Accra, where all kinds of vegetables and other commodities are sold in crude, evil-smelling stalls. While there are varieties of canned goods, fruits, and other staples to offer a varied diet, even a few California-canned pilchards, the native staff of life is *fufa,* a wild root somewhat resembling a sweet potato. Usually it is ground up like corn meal and mixed with water, and it is always eaten with the fingers from a bowl-shaped vessel.

We saw the African equivalent of the American beauty and tailor shops,

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hair-dressing stalls with native women acquiring their peculiar hair-dos, and I doubt if there is a town in Africa with a shop not boasting at least one hand-type Singer sewing machine.

The native women drape themselves in a batik material of native design but printed in England. In Accra it is sold at a French shop, one of many branches throughout Africa.

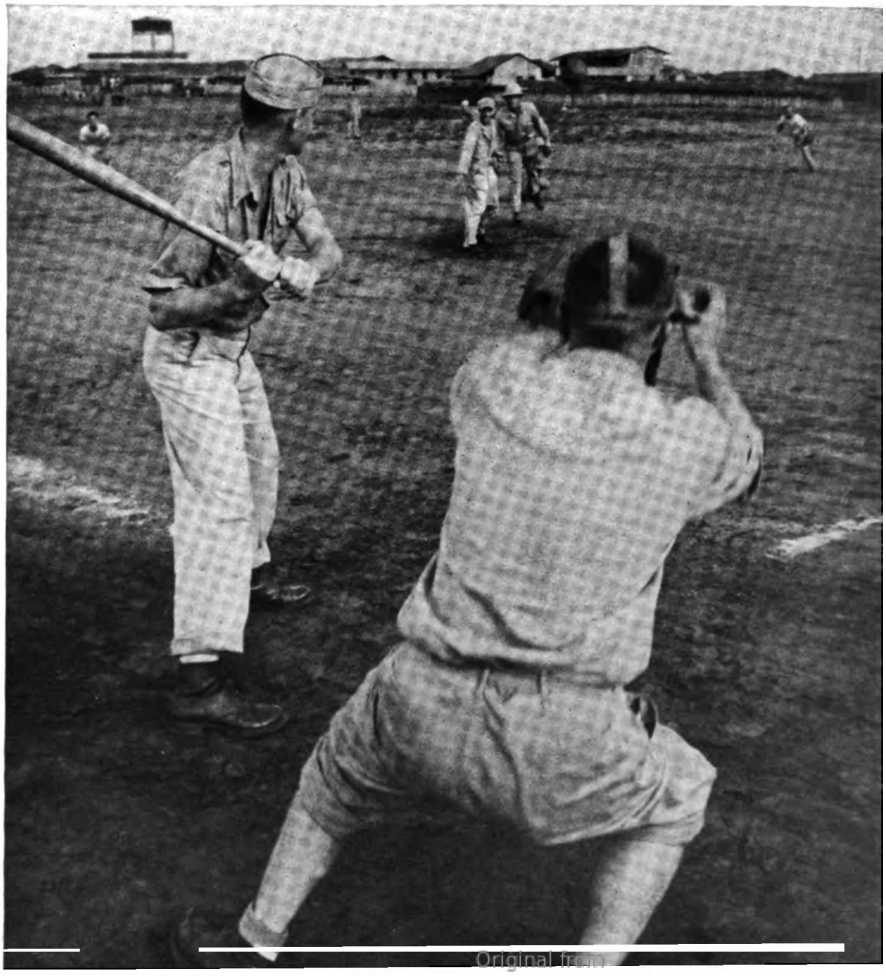
All in all, GI life at Accra and on the Gold Coast seemed agreeable enough. The mess was excellent—one meal, for example, consisted of chicken soup, baked ham, string beans, spinach, large and delicious avocados, oranges, hot baking powder biscuits, coffee, and pears. The only canned item was the pears. The worst discomfort, other than nostalgia, is the humidity. Electric light bulbs must burn constantly in clothes closets to prevent the contents from molding.

The men enjoy plenty of outdoor recreation, with the accent on baseball and volleyball. The names of some of the teams are typically American and sometimes a little ribald. They range from The Sad Sacks through The Can Openers, The Greasemonkeys and The Wonder Nine, to The Stripe Hunters, The Transients, The Wing Wits, and The Nut Twisters.

My strongest impression of the Gold Coast native, and the one which will stay with me longest, is of the file after file of great blacks, dressed in knee-length shirts, brightly fezzed, turning the large whites of their wonder-struck eyes, as they followed each move of the strange, faded human beings from another world who seemed so busy with affairs impossible to comprehend. Like trusting children they are amenable to kindness; harsh words and severe treatment result only in bewilderment and frustration.



Abundance of houseboys for personal services affords opportunity for transient pilot to relax, or participate in Home versus Visitors ball game.



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Market day at the oasis of Maiduguri in the parched desert of northern Nigeria. Natives, semi-clad or wearing loose white gowns to combat equatorial heat, barter their wares with visiting ATC personnel. Many odd trinkets enrich ever-increasing collections.

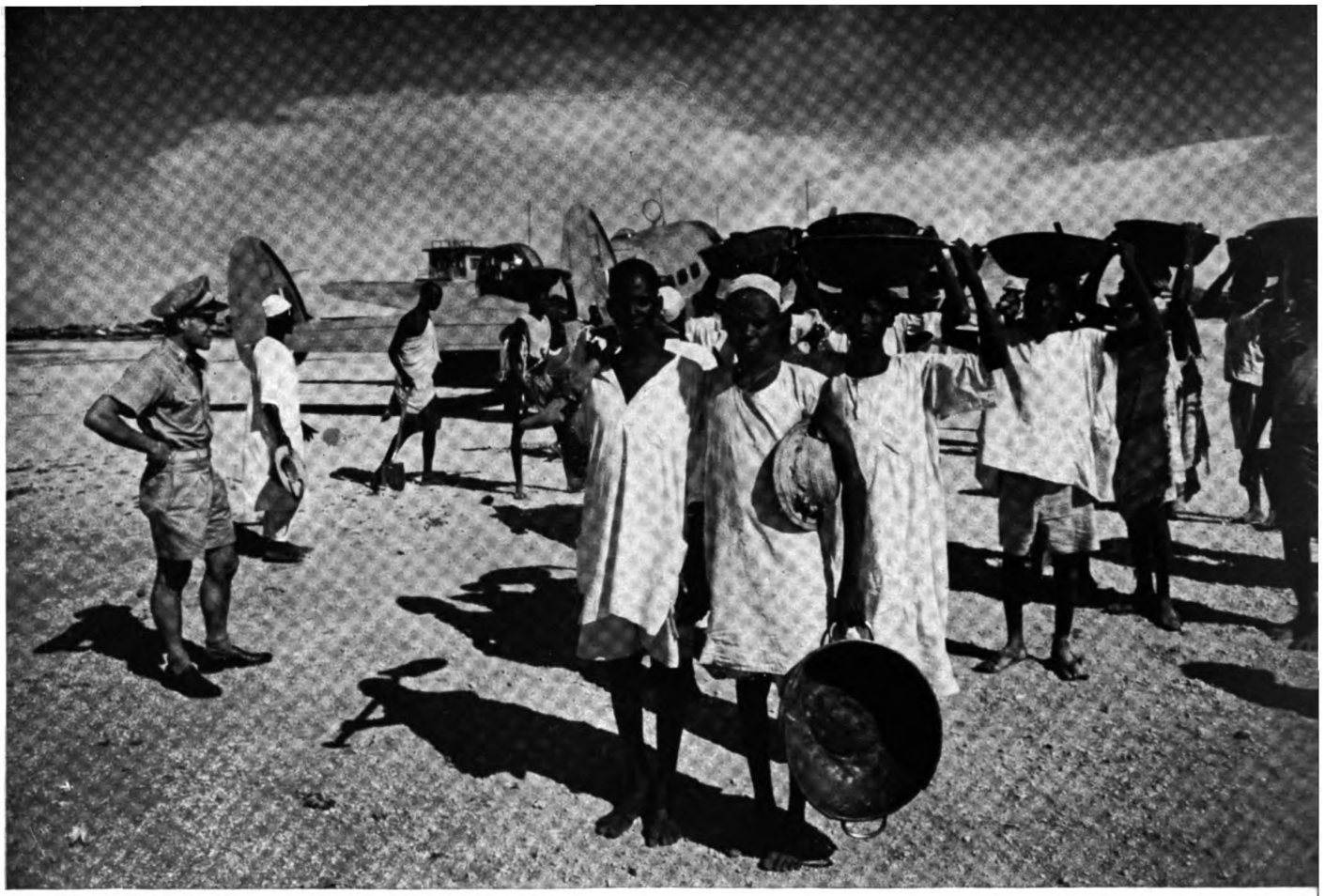


Maiduguri, Nigeria

My next destination was the walled city of Maiduguri in the bush country at the edge of the Sahara. We left Accra at five o'clock in the morning and the flight into the interior was a gradually changing panorama from lush vegetation and rain to the flat aridity of the desert. There was a brief stop for refueling at Kano, northern Nigeria, where the heat was intense. Long lines of very slow moving natives, dressed in what more than anything else looked like grandfather's long white nightshirts, were working on the airport. Using the inevitable headbaskets of Africa, they were carrying Tarvia for a new taxi strip which was under construction.

Upon arrival at the airport, located about two miles from Maiduguri, we were received cordially by the adjutant, Lieut. Douglas W. Jorn, and invited to lunch, where we met the CO,

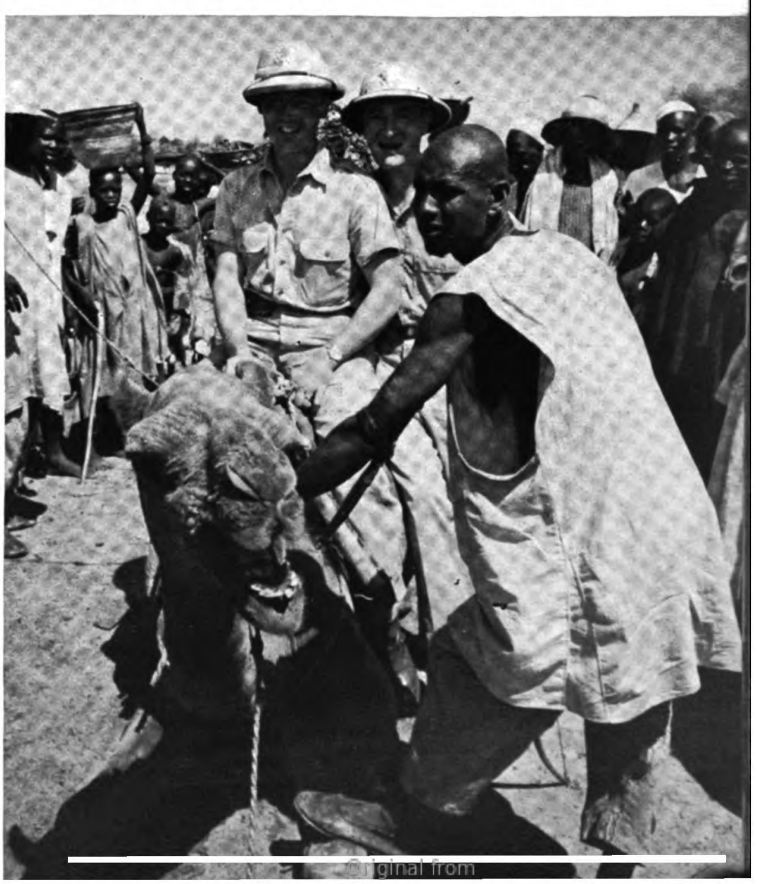
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Head-pans are the universal carry-all of African laborers. Mile-long air strips have been leveled and surfaced largely with two implements—metal pans and American shovels. (*below*) "Be sure to mail this picture home!" Lieuts. Glenn Rea and Daniel Gottlieb.

Capt. John T. Passage. The small garrison at this station lived exceedingly well despite their loneliness. The mess hall was of cement construction and well screened. Under the eaves, great yellow and brown lizards clung to the screens; now and then, much to my discomfiture, one would drop. The mess was excellent and we ate off white tablecloths, a rare sight at these far-away bases. The mess sergeant had just returned from the town market, where he had bargained for a steer, finally paying but $8. He said chickens were plentiful and inexpensive and eggs only 10 cents a dozen.

The small but modern kitchen was equipped with a huge refrigerator which had been brought in when Pan American was establishing its trans-African branch, a few months before Pearl Harbor. In the fall of 1942, the U. S. Army made its appearance in this African back country, and the little garrison was putting all installations to good use.



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NIGERIAN ARISTOCRACY. SHEHU IN CEREMONIAL ROBES GREETS VISITORS

Sgt. James H. Edwards and Pfc. Augustus Hennesey were assigned to acquaint me with the base. Not far from the billeting quarters were the stables, native-built of mud and straw, in which were kept thirty-three riding horses procured from British predecessors. A newly assigned GI could buy a horse for from £6 to £12, and many of them did. If he was transferred, there was always another buyer to be found.

MAIDUGURI-BASED PERSONNEL ENJOY CANTER ON THEIR OWN HORSES



Traffic Officer Lieut. Glenn B. Rea from Brookings, S. D., and Post Exchange Officer Lieut. Daniel Gottlieb from New York City, drove me by jeep across the flat desert to Yera, a typical African village with huts of mud and straw clustered together in an open plain. The natives were unaccustomed to white men and I was amazed to see their interest in my flash bulbs. Young and old scrambled for possession of the discarded blue bulbs, and *Ali*, my native interpreter and assistant, explained that they were coveted as ear and necklace ornaments.

A herd of wild elephants, thirty miles from Yera, had been reported, and the British District Officer, anxious to be rid of the beasts, invited the servicemen to hunt them and waived the usual $50 hunting license fee. The elephants inflicted great damage during the planting season and the killing of a few would persuade the rest of the herd to depart for safer regions.

At the base, movies are shown in the open air three times weekly, until the onset of the rainy season, when they are held indoors. After mess, on other evenings, the men have little to do but stand about in groups outside the mess hall and talk. It's not too unlike Main Street back home, except for the lack of girls to review and whistle at approvingly. On my first night at the base I chatted with a group of men who were idly watching two toads engaged in catching bugs. It was an opportunity for a little gambling, and the boys laid wagers on which toad would catch the heartier meal. Such games are about the greatest excitement the men can provide for themselves here. A trip to Maiduguri now and then, the moving pictures, and their mail fill most of their leisure time.

Maiduguri is an ancient city of 24,000 natives ruled over by Umar Ibn Muhammed el Amin, Shehu (pronounced shay-hu) of Bornu. He governs the 35,000 surrounding square miles, in which a million people live. They are mostly Mohammedans, and in this particular locality they are allowed four wives. The number varies in different areas, but in Bornu province the

→ **Sanctum sanctorum.** In palace of sun-baked mud, the Shehu of Bornu, northeastern province of Nigeria, holds council meeting.

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En route to Assam. Lieut Robert P. Casey (Bellevue, Pa.), attempts to explain American money and ivory cubes to amused Sudanese. Lieuts. Joseph G. Bubenik (Chicago) standing, and Joseph T. Turner (Kansas City), leaning. (*below*) Checking in at base, Khartoum.

limit is four, and this rule supposedly applies to the Shehu, but I was told he had numerous dependents in his capacious quarters.

In Maiduguri wives may be purchased for 15 shillings and up. One native lad of twenty-three had accumulated three of his allotted wives through the generosity of three American soldiers. The ages of his spouses were fourteen, thirteen, and twelve respectively. The first was purchased for a dollar given to him by a sergeant who had taken pity on his womanless state, but she was very ugly, he had to admit. Comely females are more dearly bought it would seem, for the next wife, who was prettier, cost him $5, which he had talked a captain into giving him. Later, with a $12 gift, he bought the "most beautiful girl in Africa." Now he was the proud father of two children, both of whom had been named for the men who had made possible his fatherhood.



The African boys of Maiduguri, though eager to work with the Army men at the air base, must endure a

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lot of horseplay. One evening some pilots put a gas mask on one of the native boys and were chagrined to discover that this so terrified the other natives that they ran off in a panic and had to be coaxed back to investigate the friend who had turned demon.

African nights are cool and starry, much like Arizona, and our take-off from Maiduguri occurred on one such ideal occasion. I packed, "dashed" the houseboy, and was off at 2 A.M. for Khartoum, 1,300 miles to the east.

We flew across French Equatorial Africa and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, making a single gas stop at the tiny village of El Fashar. Here a little group of Americans service the constant stream of ATC planes that comprise the African shuttle. Dusty caravans of camels and donkeys plodded slowly along the ancient desert route leading from Lagos, a seaport of Nigeria, and on to Khartoum. It takes fully a year for these supply-laden caravans to traverse the route; ATC planes fly it in but eleven hours.

A giraffe who had made El Fashar field his playground apparently refused to be awed by the inroads being made on his stamping grounds by civilization, and had developed a startling habit of sauntering up to a newly arrived plane and sticking his long-necked head through the window of the cockpit to investigate and astonish some of the visiting pilots.

Khartoum

Khartoum, the capital of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan since 1830, has always been a cosmopolitan center, but in these wartime days it is literally a "league of all nations." There are Greeks, Jews, Syrians, Sudanese, Arabians, Egyptians, Copts, Ethio-



Road graders. Turbans of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan supplant skull caps of West Africa. (*below*) Intense heat necessitates frequent rest periods for workers.



Flat-bottomed river steamers, trans-African caravans, ATC planes; by water, land, and air, ancient and modern modes of travel meet at Nile headwaters.



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pians, French, Americans, and, of course, British. The city is located on the left bank of the Blue Nile near its junction with the White Nile. This junction of waters takes the form of an elephant's head, which is what the name "Khartoum" means. Its history has been turbulent, even before this war. Khartoum was the scene of the great Chinese Gordon's heroic defense against the insurgent Sudanese, which ended in his death in 1885. The city was captured and held by the Mahdi, the leader of the Mohammedans, who retained control until 1898, when it was retaken for the British by General Kitchener.

The airport, located some distance outside the city, is an important focal point in Air Transport Command routes as well as those of other nations. The prewar commercial field, then small and antiquated, was taken over by the Royal Air Force at the outbreak of hostilities.

In the early days of the war, before the British had been able to organize enough opposition to the rampaging Italians, Mussolini's troops took Kassala and Gallabat, both about 250 miles away, from which points Italian planes could and did attack Khartoum, until they were driven out of eastern Africa.

Before Pearl Harbor an American commercial air line had moved into Khartoum, and when the Army came in December, 1942, it drew largely from civilian mechanical help at that base as well as at another commercial aviation base at Eritrea. Khartoum, geographically ideal, became a vital junction point in the supply route to Cairo and the Near East at the time Rommel was hammering at Egypt's doors.

All this was months before our arrival, but the airport still presented a martial appearance. It was surrounded by about seven miles of barbed wire and protected by a group of fierce-looking Sudanese called "the donkey fence patrol," borrowed from the British and paid by Uncle Sam. It was so named because the huge black soldiers covered their patrols astride little gray donkeys that looked ridiculously small in comparison to their riders.

SUDANESE GUARD. THESE FEARLESS SOLDIERS EXECUTE ORDERS RIGIDLY

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ATC headquarters at the airport were maintained in a group of buildings originally constructed by the Sudanese government and intended as Gordon College and Agricultural School. With the onset of war, the educational project had to be abandoned. Meanwhile, the buildings were serving excellently as barracks, mess halls, and recreation rooms.

Lieut. Col. Adolph P. Kerr from Santa Barbara, the CO, had reason to be proud of the base installations, particularly those of the enlisted men, which included a library, a lounge, a rather elaborate post exchange, and a barber shop.

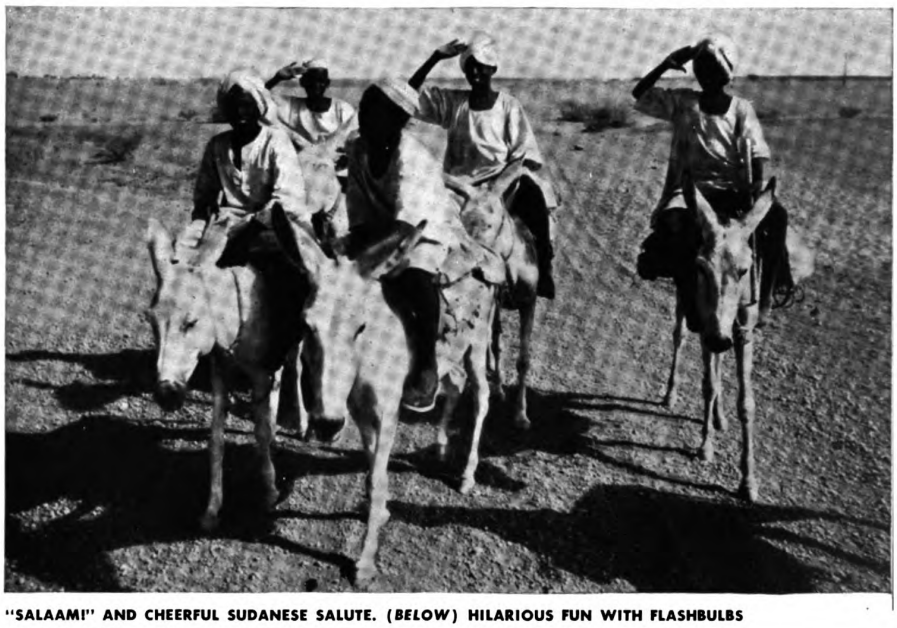
Cpl. Thomas R. McKnight from North Dakota, Pfc. Maurice Vaughn from Texas, and Pvt. John Stice from Arkansas escorted me by jeep to the city of Khartoum. Here we visited the Starlight Roof of the Great Britain Club. The entertainers there, who had drifted down from Cairo during that city's period of uneasiness over Rommel's approach, were rehearsed in singing and dancing by Manager Jimmy Kohn. Jimmy, catering to the American forces, plays in the band himself as a drummer and permits the girls to dine and dance with the soldiers.

The climate of Khartoum is extremely hot—probably hotter than any place I had yet visited. Everyone perspires freely and loses weight. Some boys, unable to stand the heat, have to be transferred elsewhere. The soft-drinks bar at the PX is crowded at all hours, for everybody must drink quarts of liquids daily.

One GI has contrived a unique method of providing drinking glasses for use at the PX. After filling a beer bottle with oil to the desired height of the tumbler, he thrusts a red-hot



PVT. STICE (*LEFT*) AND CPL. McKNIGHT ENJOY PFC. VAUGHN'S SUDANESE HAIR TRIM



"SALAAM!" AND CHEERFUL SUDANESE SALUTE. (*BELOW*) HILARIOUS FUN WITH FLASHBULBS



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Native tailor at Wadi Seidna (ATC's Khartoum base) expertly turns worn cuffs and collars, repairs suntans and shorts for GI's.

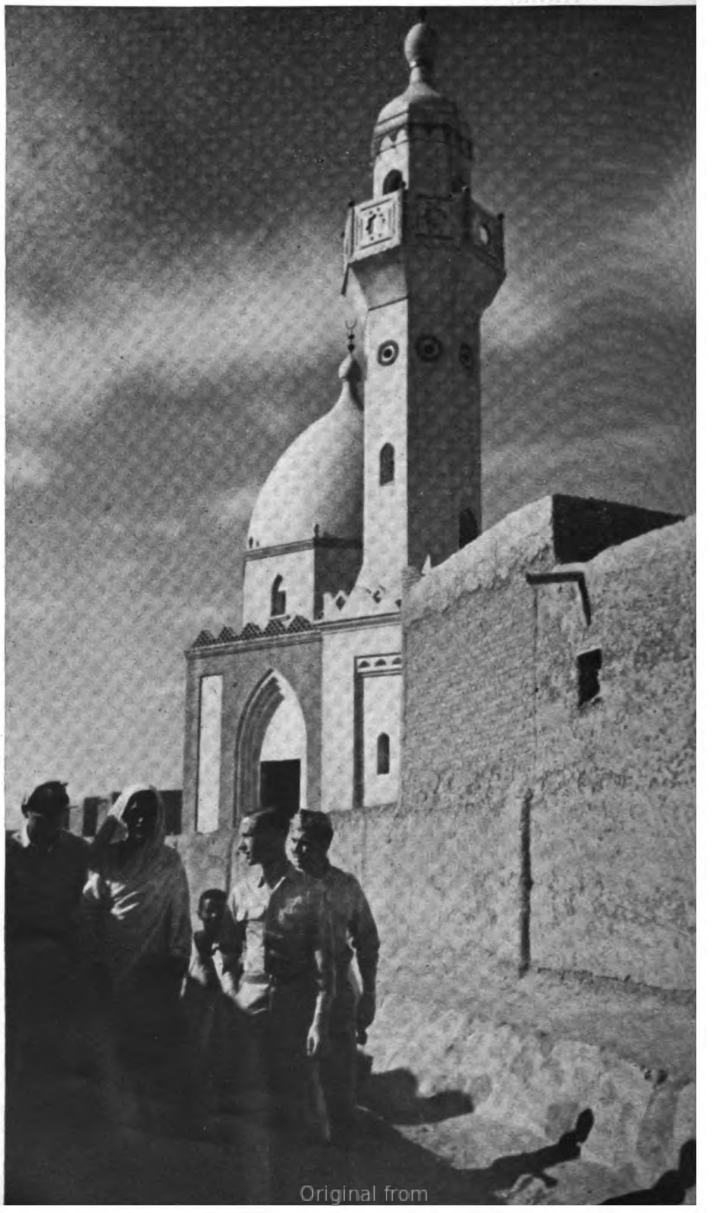


Greek drugstore in Khartoum. (*below*) Mohammedan minaret in Omdurman, ancient metropolis, between Khartoum and the base.



Wadi Seidna PX sells carved ivory, canned fruit, candy, fruitades. On PX's desert veranda GI's relax, munch on snacks, write letters.





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poker through the neck of the bottle. The heavy glass breaks evenly at the oil line, and the rough edges are then filed.

Much at the Khartoum base is far from pleasant diversion. There is always plenty of work to be done and it is not governed by the hours indicated on the clock. Planes come in and must be serviced. When the heat is insufferable, they may plan to leave before dawn to avoid the worst of it. Here also is the unending stream of cargo to be unloaded and reloaded on other planes and the continuous procession of military men traveling east to India, north to the Middle East, or west to the states. An overloaded plane may occasionally crack up during take-off, necessitating fast and precise work by repair crews. Its freight is transferred to another plane—and rapidly—so that it can get to its destination without delay. Then the plane must be salvaged, if possible; otherwise it is cannibalized.

Stories of the Hump are rife at this last stop in Africa. The dangers of its terrifying winds, high above the towering mountains, are sensed in the quiet and subdued conversation of pilots and navigators who have returned from there. The look that creeps into the eyes of these men expresses much. Many have been under enemy fire; the Japs take special delight in attacking the unarmed transports carrying supplies into China. Yes, in Khartoum, the Hump is far more ominous than before and much closer.

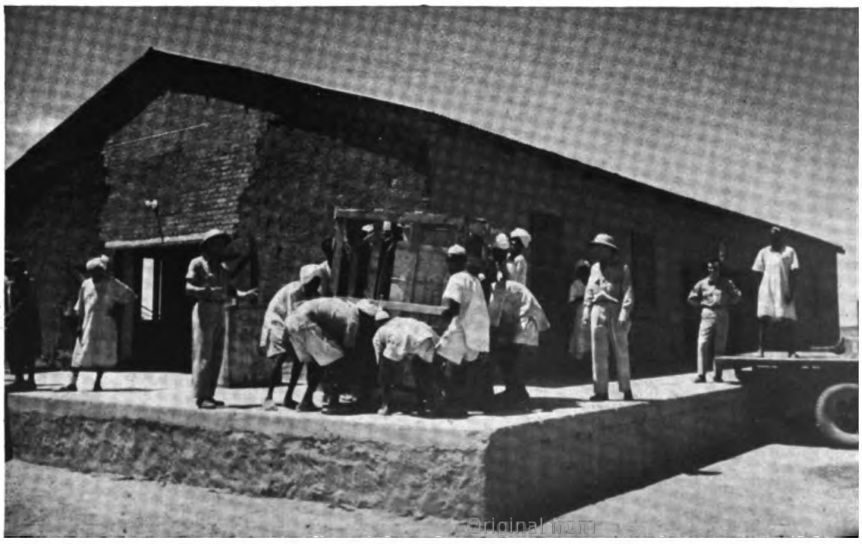
From Khartoum to Aden we were piloted by two second lieutenants who fly shuttlewise between the two towns. In fact, the entire route, from Accra to the Indian terminus at Chabua, is sectionalized much as any American transcontinental airline. One great dif-



Cargo ships, too overburdened for take-off, occasionally belly-land at end of runway. Crew under civilian John W. Byrnes (*left*) quickly makes repairs.



Indispensable native labor speeds extension of airstrip to help prevent accidents like above. (*below*) Warehouse for freight transfer at Wadi Seidna.



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WITH MUSETTE BAG FOR PILLOW, BRITISH VICTIM SUCCUMBS TO BUCKET-SEAT FATIGUE



JULY FOURTH. BRITISH INVITE YANKS TO BEER PARTY. *(BELOW)* GAS STOP AT ADEN



ference is that Air Transport Command routes across Africa and India demand 140 flying hours a month, as compared with the 85-hour month average of a commercial transport pilot.

Arabia

The flight to Aden, at first, was over desert country. Then we crossed the mountains of Abyssinia through a fertile pass, after which again all was parched desert sand continuing eastward of the mountains and sloping down to the aquamarine blue waters of the Red Sea.

After a brief hot visit at Aden, we were grateful to get on our way again. We poured ourselves into the cauldron that was our plane and fretted for the high, cool altitudes above. Soon the sky became overcast. Streaks of angry clouds gathered above and below us, and in no time we found ourselves in heavy fog, so thick we could hardly see the wing tips.

I went forward to the cockpit and at once noticed the radio compass slowly turning around and around. The pilot was comforting. He said that he could "feel" his way through this kind of weather. I don't know why, but I believed him and felt better, especially after he said, "Oh, we just descend and fly over the water, following the shore line, until we pick out the landing field at Salalah."

Feeling safer, I went back to my bucket seat. We were descending carefully, when suddenly, through the mist, water appeared only about 25 feet below us. Actually we were hedgehopping the swells, and it seemed at every moment as if we were about to strike the water. Visibility was very poor; we could see but 300 feet ahead or at the side. I told myself that we

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Startled nomad finds airport on old camel route. Near Arab market (*center*) Pradhan Singh exhibits fruit from experimental farm.





could always crash-land on the beach should we get lost. Suddenly our Lib lurched upwards. Inches below us flashed a 300-foot cliff. An enlisted man opposite me was, I believe, just a bit more scared than I, but no one said a word. The passenger-pilots continued with their reading. Now and then they'd throw a startled glance at one another, cock an eyebrow, but that was all. I too, refusing to be outdone, remained outwardly unperturbed. Finally we landed and I said to our pilot, "That was quite a flight." Considering my own feelings, I thought it a marvelously restrained understatement. However, he returned with: "Oh, that was nothing; we've flown through worse." At dinner that night at Salalah he talked photography and never mentioned what, to me, had been a flight warranting at least a post-mortem discussion. Of one thing I was certain — either he was very mocking of danger or else I was very timid.

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Our meal that evening was something of a celebration. Since it was the Fourth of July, we had gazelle steak, tender and delicious. The Sultan of Oman, Said bin Taimur, who controls 1,500 miles of the southern coast of Arabia, gives his permission to the American force of 57 army men to shoot two or three gazelles a month, and the boys greatly enjoy hunting over the desert in a jeep. They also hunt wild dogs and jack rabbits.

The next day I was the lone passenger in a plane that was packed with cargo, en route to the island of Misarah, a gas stop on the run to Karachi, India. Again the clouds were evil, but

NOT ALL LIBERATOR EXPRESSES ARE EQUIPPED WITH UPHOLSTERED SEATS, LIKE THOSE ENJOYED BY THESE EXHAUSTED CREWMEN EN ROUTE TO ASSAM



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by this time I was determined to ignore their forecast. Pilots and planes, working as such well-ordered units, were replacing my apprehension with confidence, despite the fact that we were approaching increasingly formidable weather.

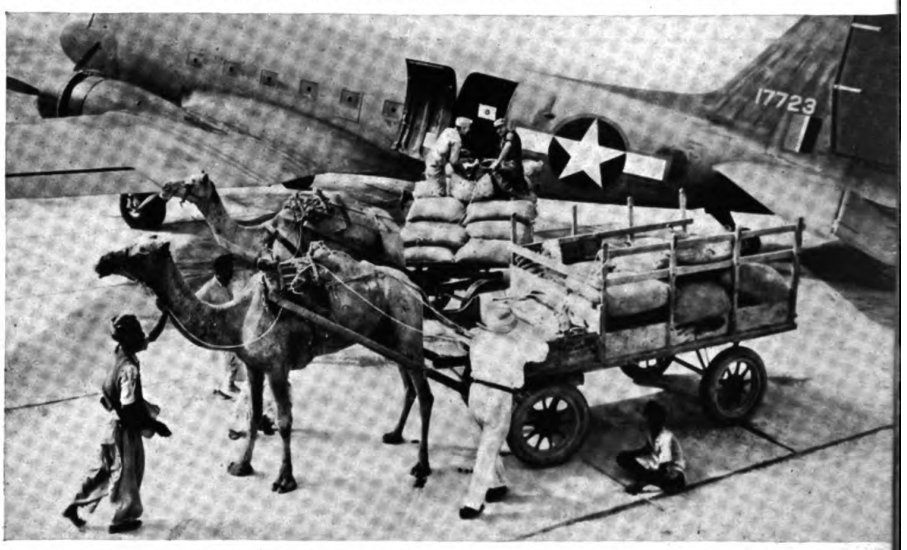
Copilot Lieut. Johnny Kaspick came back for a brief visit and we sat on boxes marked "Confidential Equipment" and enjoyed a cigarette or two. Johnny's first wedding anniversary found him a long way from his bride and home in Tyrone, Pa. He wanted to know if I had seen their landing at Salalah the day before. I, along with everybody else who had heard the engines of his C-87 hidden in the pea-soup mist, had run outside, expecting a crash landing, but the ship, ghostlike and awesome, appeared out of the mist and landed smoothly. "The radio report," said Johnny, "had given us a ceiling of 300 feet; visibility of three-quarters of a mile. Could be, but that was the lowest 300 feet, and the shortest three-quarters of a mile I ever saw. We circled the field a couple of times in a steep bank, then slipped low and landed." According to Johnny, that's all there was to bringing in 76,000 pounds of airplane, gasoline, and freight!

Karachi, India

From Masirah to Karachi, 580 miles, I was again the sole passenger. I didn't mind, for I was tired and draped myself over crates and boxes and slept for two hours. I was awakened by rough weather and the bumping of the plane and cargo. Layers of clouds, mist, and rain were with us again. I could feel the plane descending, cautiously seeking its way, I knew, to within sight of the ocean, so as to follow the shore-



AT STOPOVERS EACH CREW MEMBER TAKES TURN AT KEEPING SHIP UNDER SURVEILLANCE



KARACHI CAMEL CARTS. (*BELOW*) COMBAT AND MALARIA CASUALTIES FROM CBI THEATER



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Newly arrived C-87 at Karachi, India, unloads duffel bags, B-4's, and cartons containing gear of combat crews for transfer to ox cart, while flight crew relaxes in seats removed from plane. (*below*) No standard garb for Indian baggagemen. Anything goes.



line, as we had previously at Salalah.

Finally we reached the base at Karachi in the midst of a dust storm so violent that particles of sand could be heard hitting the fuselage, and I marveled that the engines survived such treatment.

In addition to everything else meted out by the weather man in the monsoon country, there is hail. The pilots speak of large hailstones often hitting the *bottom* of the ship. The tremendous updrafts within the thunderheads draw raindrops upward until they reach high altitudes where they freeze into tiny hailstones, fall, and are again blown upward, becoming larger

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and heavier each time, until finally they have weight enough to resist the rising blasts of air and obey the law of gravity.

For men who are headed for the Hump, Karachi, the first stop in India, signalizes many things. Definitely, it is the end of light-hearted adventure, even for those who had most stubbornly retained that spirit. Now was the beginning of sober fact, of reality, for the young pilots equipped with everything but experience. They have had a little taste of monsoon weather and realize that this is only the fringe, that far bigger and nastier stuff awaits them. Now, they constantly sought the advice of men who had been exposed to the perils of the Hump. They clustered around their advisers, earnestly attentive to the least word of caution, the little vertical lines of worry beginning to stamp themselves indelibly on their foreheads. Returning pilots talked mostly of unbelievable winds—winds that would send a heavy transport plane over the Himalayas into China in less than two hours, then necessitate a five-hour return trip.

Perhaps more than in other countries, India, to the GI, means that he must always be on guard against climate and sanitary conditions. The Indian sun is dangerous. The head and the back of the neck must be kept covered, and sunglasses are essential. All drinking water, fruit, and vegetables must be treated for contamination; the malarial mosquito and the fever-carrying sandfly are ever present. Rabies is common in dogs and jackals, and even swimming frequently is denied the GI because of marauding crocodiles. All Americans coming to India are soberly warned of these things. They are given a copy of the Army's "Pocket Guide to India," a fas-



Airport construction in India. From cement mixer hundreds of women, robed in gay colors, carry concrete via head pans to end of runway, half mile distant.



Men place concrete-filled pans upon women's heads and remove them at end of trip. Partially built sections of runway are allowed to dry before last fill.



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Copilot Capt. Joseph D. McGuire is not concerned over stalled engine (*left*). There are peaks hidden in monsoon weather ahead.



ψ **Sacred Brahma bullocks** of India can be worked. (*right*) Addresses on cargo are simplified for natives by varicolored symbols.



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cinating and informative little booklet. But despite the risks, service in India is not too dangerous. As the Army puts it: "People who take the simple precautions live years in India without illness."

Our stay at Karachi was not long, but the drifting sand covered my bags and equipment as thoroughly as a prairie blizzard could have done the job.

Agra, India

It was a four-hour hop to Agra, where the airport was crowded with planes of all descriptions — fighters, bombers, transports—and there, too, were many of the crews and fellow passengers I had met on the trip from Natal and all across Africa. Rumors still circulated among the boys but by now they were tempered with more discretion. The wildest and most persistent stories, of course, were of the Hump and its perils.

Sleeping accommodations at the base were provided in long, whitewashed, stable-like buildings with brick floors. Cots, or charpoys, are hand-made, with a webbing of two-inch canvas strips stretched across the wooden framework, over which are thrown a single sheet and a blanket. At both ends of the charpoys are T-bars that suspend the mosquito nets, and there are a number of well-made punkahs, for it is hot and humid at Agra; but, unfortunately, there are no punkah boys.

At Agra, as elsewhere in India, a great variety of scavengers seem to have the run of the place. There are kites, ravens, jackals, wild dogs, hawks, and vultures. Even the turtles in the rivers do their share by disposing of the bodies of the poor, which in India are tossed into the streams.

The American base consists of about



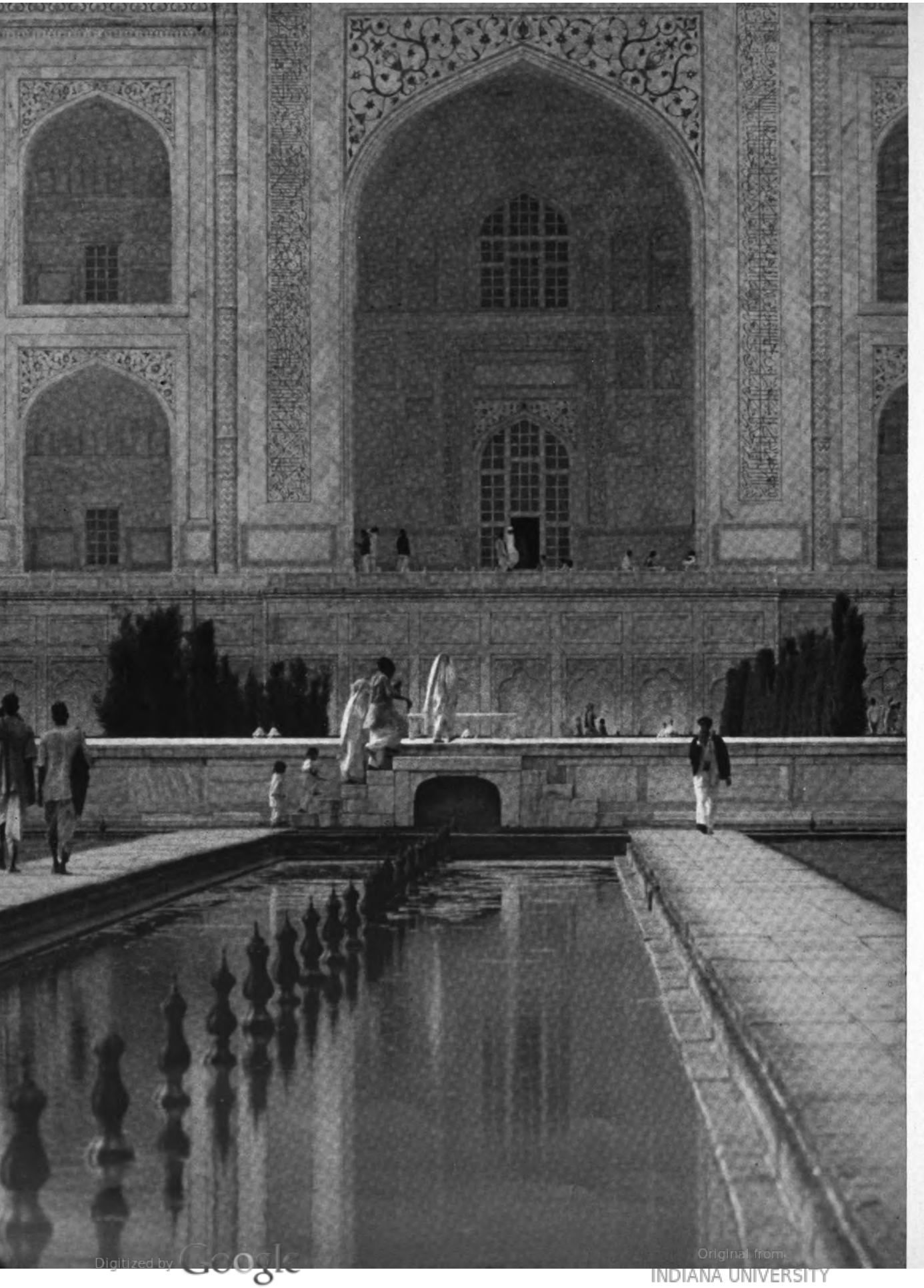
At Agra, transient's nightly lodging fee of one rupee includes payment for personal services of the Indian bearers. Cots are called "charpoys" in India.



All species of vultures, protected by Indian government, continually loiter about mess tents. (*below*) One-day service, but laundry takes a real beating.



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2,000 officers and men, and over 2,000 Indian coolies are hired, for Agra is the main supply depot. Both combat and transport aircraft are repaired and maintained here.

At all stops mimeographed sheets of paper are handed out giving the rules and instructions of the base as well as information on sight-seeing. Those passed out at Agra were typical and so completely American in their tone that immediately we felt very much at home, even though home was back halfway around the world. They began: "Welcome to Agra—home of the Taj Mahal (one of the seven wonders of the world) and boasting of 366 sunshiny days a year and a mean (*mean*) temperature of——degrees (to be filled in at your discretion)." It told you that "the Officers' Mess is a short walk (or trot) from the quarters;" that "every Saturday night the Officers' Mess features Benny Goodman (recordings) and his orchestra from 9:30 P.M. on. No cover; no minimum. Wolves requested to modulate their howls during waltzes. Free snacks served; free drinks not served." It further informed that the Taj Mahal was about six miles from the field, and that transportation was available on the main road by tonga, "a wooden jeep, with horse." "Jewelry prices usually are higher than in the states, many of the jewels are precious glass"; that the Base is "not responsible for lost dogs, children, baggage, or firearms."

One night we went to a dance given by the Telegraph Recreation Club. There was a huge turnout and many of the Anglo-Indian girls, some unusually lovely, attended with their parents. Most of them enjoyed GI jitterbugging. I photographed four sergeants who had just returned from fighting in North Africa and had dropped in for a last bit of feminine companionship. S/Sgts. Vincent DeVito, Danny Dever and James Wallace, all from Ohio, and S/Sgt. Seymour Singer from Illinois were leaving the next day for further fighting in China.

← **GI's discover** the much photographed Taj Mahal pool is but one foot deep – fishing and swimming not allowed.



Transient sergeants eagerly await cut-in with Marjorie DeSanges at Agra dancing party. (*below*) Lucky British sergeant wins lottery.



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RENTED BICYCLES COST 12 RUPEES ($4) EACH PER MONTH





ATC AIRPORTS ARE CONSTRUCTED BY PRIMITIVE METHODS AND SHEER NUMBERS OF LABORERS

Many servicemen who, before the war, knew little of India save what they read in the sparse paragraphs in their schoolbooks, have had to adapt themselves to unexpected customs. In parts of India wood cutting, water systems, and transportation still are primitive. The servicemen shudder at seeing their clothing beaten and slammed about in the open-air laundries.

We took off from Agra in a pouring rainstorm. I sat on the navigator's desk between the two pilots and the rain leaked through the windows and down onto my shoulders. The country ahead was treacherous and the danger of getting lost in the jungle not remote. Our crew had taken every precaution before we left. Capt. John L. (Pappy) Wilkes cocked a trained ear alertly to every sound as the engines were tested, his pet monkey chattering away as if cautioning him not to forget a single detail. Tonight we would be at the end of the line, at Chabua, and I wondered if I would see the men with the sealed orders who had left the states with me. I knew I would see my brother and I was anticipating his complete surprise, for I had resisted the temptation to write and prepare him for my visit.

To get there, we must fly across the top of India, with a gas stop at Gaya, then through the valley of the Brahmaputra. This unpredictable stream, 1,800 miles long, has its headwaters far up between the western Himalayas and the lofty mountains of Tibet. It flows eastward above the Indian

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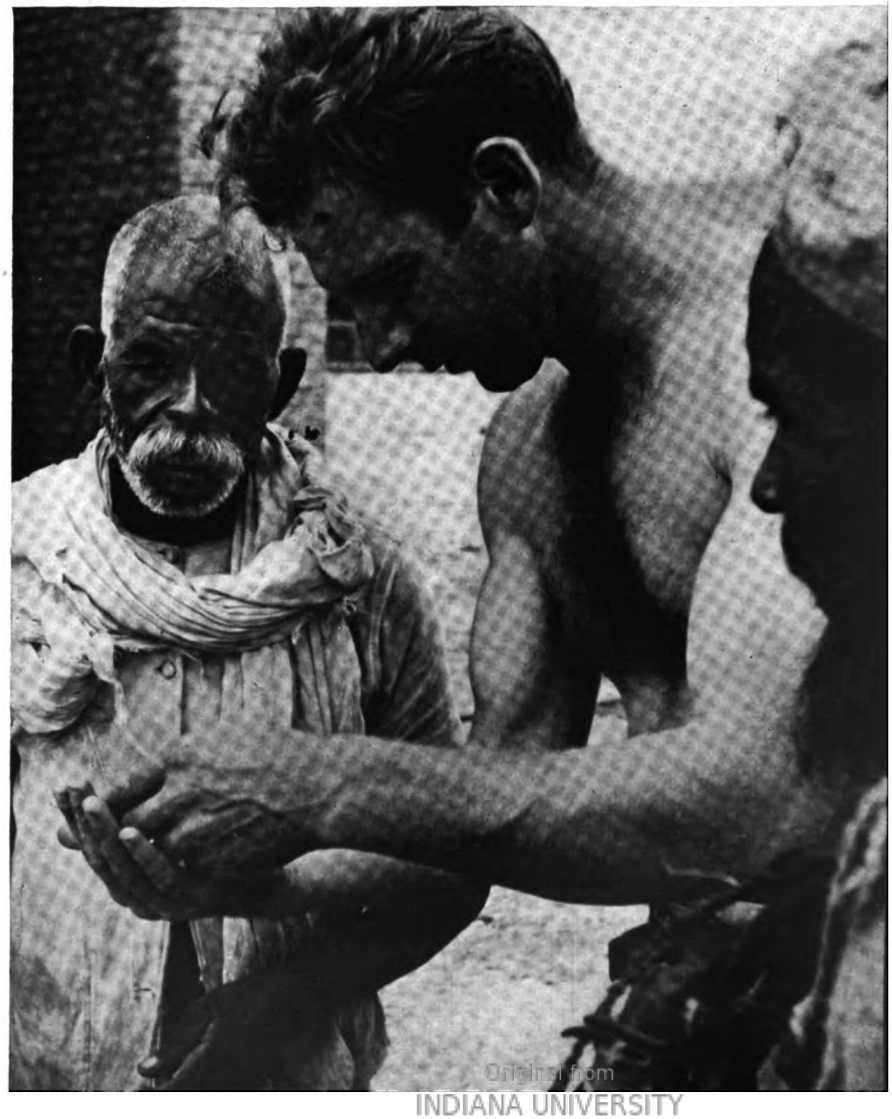
province of Nepal, past the world's highest peak, Mt. Everest, then turns abruptly south into the province of Assam. In its upper waters, the Brahmaputra is known by several different names, and its mountain stretches are rugged and turbulent. Throughout Assam, and on down to its junction with the Ganges, it is placid, sluggish, indifferent to its course, meandering this way and that through the countryside—until the onset of the monsoons. Then it has been known to rise as high as 27 feet in as many hours, when it ravages for miles the surrounding country, engulfing untold numbers of lives.

On this last flight, we climbed up past four layers of clouds to a 3,000-foot level. Pappy kept his head close to the blister window trying to see ahead. We almost never glimpsed the ground, for the clouds were impenetrable for great stretches. I occupied the copilot's seat while he slept in a sitting position on the navigator's bench, between Pappy and me, with an arm carelessly thrown over each of our chairs. He remained unconcerned throughout the entire trip. We used the automatic pilot and Pappy adjusted the elevator and rudder dials and trimmed the ship at intervals. I concentrated on the evil weather; we didn't talk much up on the flight deck. Suddenly, Pappy yells, "Think it will rain?" Then he grins, and we capture his mood. The strain is over and, as if the sun had been waiting for such a change in our dispositions, the weather clears and everybody is happy.

After refueling at Gaya, I went with the crew to a briefing session before our final 680-mile hop to the end of the line. It was a simple talk. The pilots were told to follow the Brahmaputra along the 50-mile-wide valley. As



WATER WELLS ARE DUG CLOSE TO INSTALLATIONS. (BELOW) "BUCKSHEESH," TIP OF 8 ANNAS



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Above east central India. (*below*) Relief pilots take over while Capt. John L. (Pappy) Wilkes, center, copilot McGuire, left center, ante up more rupees.



↓ **Monsoon rains** inundate Brahmaputra valley between Himalayas and Naga Hills. From plane's window, human beings and livestock are seen isolated on roofs.



there were several storms ahead, we should fly low, "and don't lose sight of the river." If we did—well, there were the Himalayas to our left and the Naga Hills to the right.

Back again in the same plane, the "Pee-Wee," it was nice to fly with a familiar crew. It had been my experience previously to stay behind while the crews flew on to their destination, seldom if ever to be met again.

With Pappy at the controls we followed the Brahmaputra, but it was difficult to sight the main channel because of the floods. The valley was inundated. Occasionally we saw a forlorn animal on the roof of a floating farm house. We flew through numerous storms and the pilots became concerned, for this was the first time they had flown the route. Near the end of the line we signaled the Army Spotters below so they could identify us as a friendly plane. Because of proximity to the Japs, who were only about 100 miles off over the Naga Hills, the use of radio was dangerous, and we had been ordered to lower our landing gear or otherwise visibly signal.

Suddenly, from the left, a single-engined plane buzzed directly toward us, barely missing our Liberator as he shot upward and away from us.

"Did you see that?" exclaimed Pappy. We both had the same thought —a Jap Zero! We kept searching the sky, certain that we were to be attacked again.

We learned later that the spotters below had been confused by our identifying signal, and becoming suspicious, had directed a P-40 to investigate. Had not the pilot of that fighter plane recognized us instantly, he would have shot us down.

→ **Upon approaching Assam,** treacherous monsoon thunderhead rises to a height of 20,000 feet.

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CHABUA. HEAVY SURFACING OVER DEEP MUD OF ONE-TIME RICE PADDIES WAS VITAL IN CONSTRUCTION OF AIR STRIPS. (*BELOW*) "HEY! PAGE SIR WALTER"

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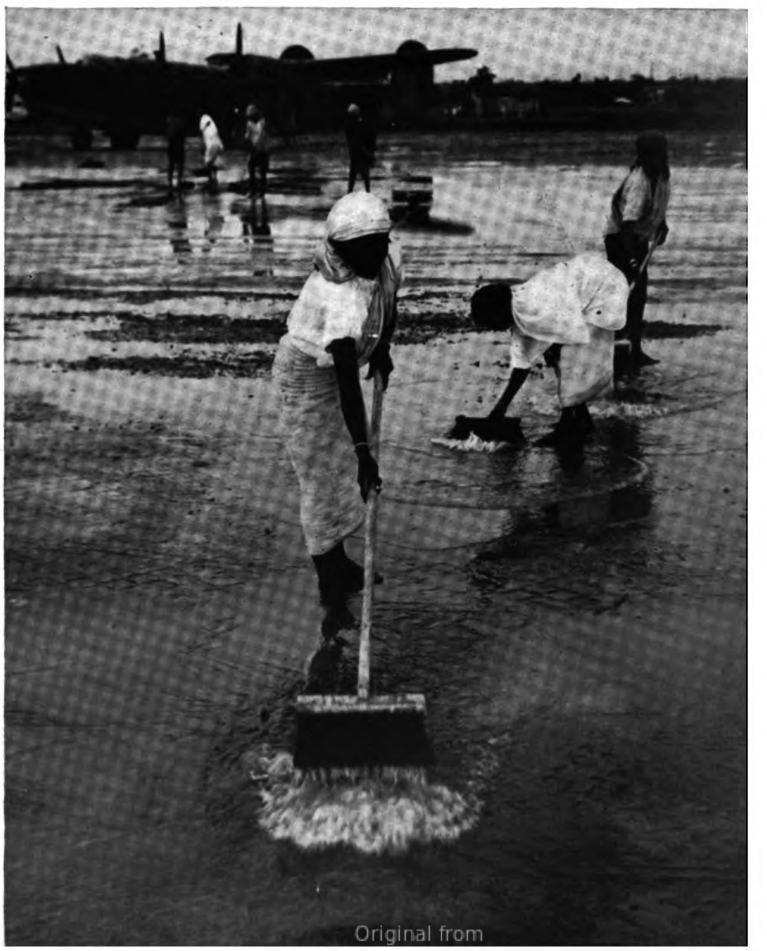


MAIN STREET AT THE POLO GROUNDS TRANSIENT CAMP NEAR CHABUA DURING THE RAINY SEASON. *(BELOW)* SWEEPER-WALLAS CLEAR RUNWAY OF PUDDLES

Assam, India

We landed in rain so heavy that the ground on both sides of the runway was almost entirely under water. I wondered then what would happen if a plane veered off into that mud at 100 miles an hour. There was water everywhere; crews of natives were sweeping it off the runways, it stood in great muddy puddles in the village streets; it dripped off the thatched roofs of the bashas; and all of Chabua was steaming and musty. Nevertheless, we liked the country at first sight, and later I learned that all newcomers are delighted with the green grass and foliage after their long, dry desert flights. Here water would not be rationed as it had been at so many stops.

I checked in at the Operations Office and made arrangements to carry out a little plot, a long-anticipated pleasure. My brother Samuel had been in the Assam sector for a year and four months, and I knew he would welcome my arrival as only a lonely soldier can. I telephoned



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Arrivals at Chabua search hopefully for personal luggage. (*below*) Air crews over occupied China wear Chinese flags for identification in event of forced landings.



Assam, boom town at end of line. ATC servicemen arriving in droves occupy transient quarters even before construction of bamboo bashas is completed.



Sammie's captain, learned he was but five miles distant, and explained the situation to the officer. The captain understood and sent his young sergeant in a jeep "to pick up a passenger." When Sammie arrived, I kept out of sight. Although he had been surprisingly quick, Pappy, to add to the hoax, pulled rank and chided him for keeping the visitor waiting. Then I walked on the scene, unable to witness his indignation any longer. He forgot his anger instantly and greeted me in traditional brotherly fashion—a curse, a clasp, and a clout.

I was billeted in Chotta Bungalow, a former tea planter's home, at my brother's base. Capt. Charles G. Goff, Engineering Officer, assigned Sammie to special detail—that of taking care of me. He also lent us a jeep in which to tour around.

New arrivals at the base were billeted at the Polo Grounds Transient Camp. This area was once used by the English owners of the numerous tea plantations as a polo field. Nowadays it is surrounded by a number of bashas, the native huts, that provide quarters for the boys.

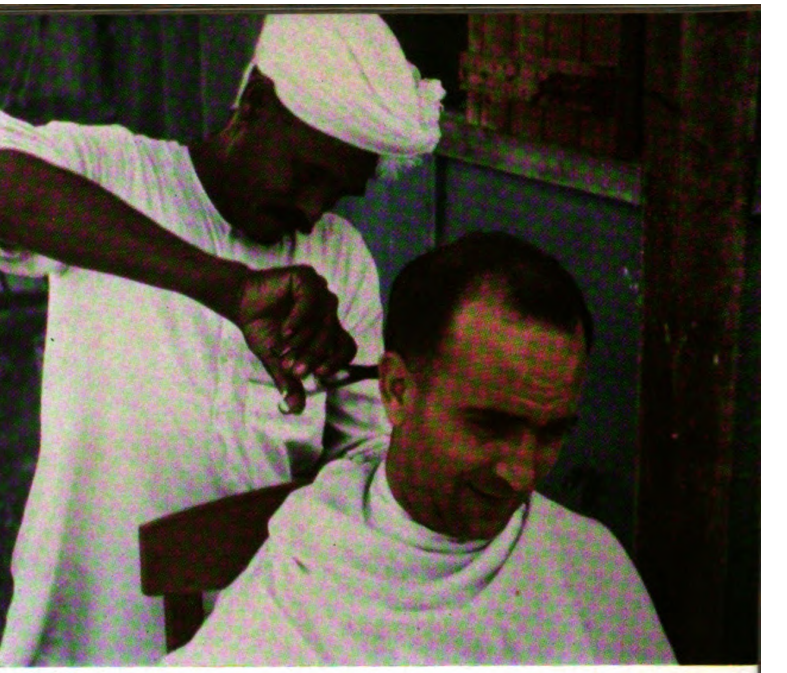
Bamboo is used almost exclusively in the construction of the bashas. After the framework is completed, the roof is thatched with long grass and then the walls are formed of interlaced bamboo matting. Nails are not used, the whole basha being held together by many bindings of thin strips.

To discover the reason for the intensified aerial activity centered in this faraway and little-known province and to obtain perspective of its importance, it is necessary to go back to February 2, 1942. Tokyo, that day, reported that Jap forces in Burma had "virtually ended" effective use of the Burma Road

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On porch of day room enlisted men are amused by horseplay of fellow "dogfaces." Young Indian was their mascot as well as bearer.

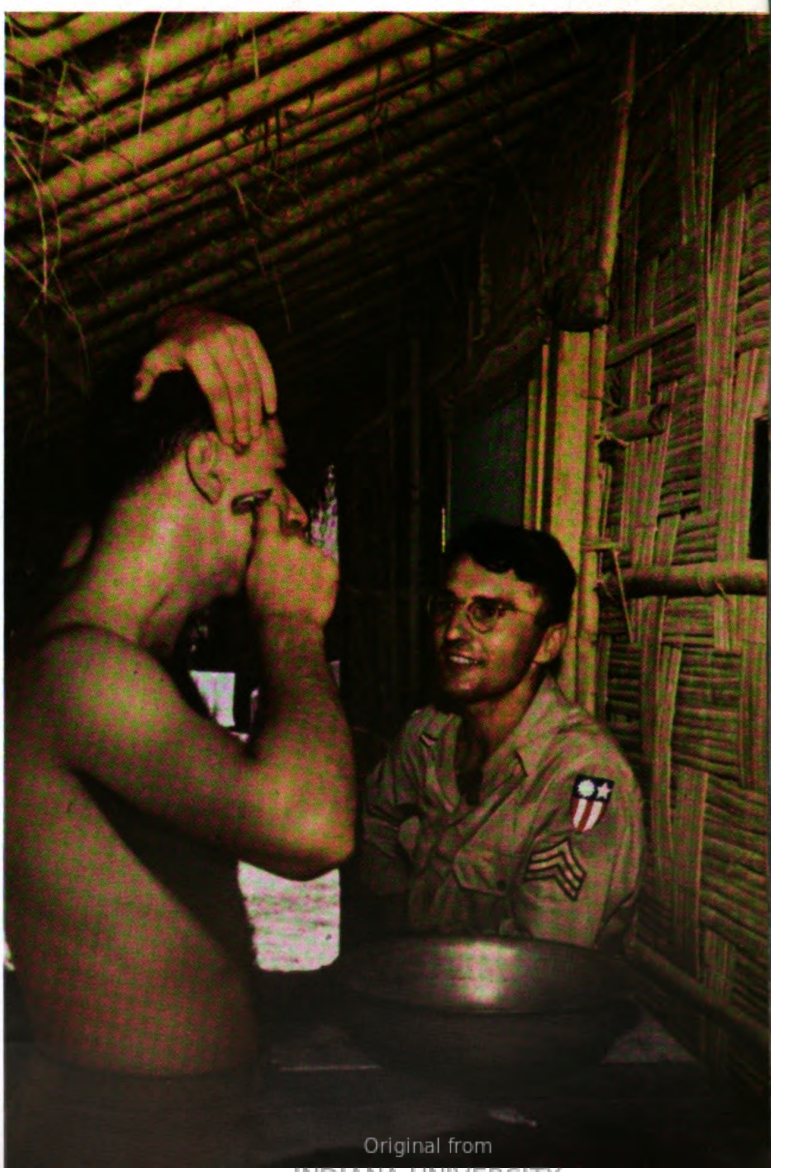


Medical Officer Capt. Eduardo F. Pena. *(below)* Sgt. Sammie West, author's brother, awaits turn at basha's only washbasin.

for the transportation of war matériel into China. Faced with this emergency, the War Department authorized immediate purchase of transport planes from commercial airlines and the creation of a Ferrying Squadron by the 10th Air Force.

How the India-China route was established, and how it is maintained, is a story of hard, dangerous work, one which will merit many spirited pages in the history of military aviation. Some of the most experienced pilots of the Ferrying Command, since incorporated into ATC, were assigned to the operations. Brig. Gen. Caleb V. Haynes, whose rescue work in Burma and China has made him a legendary figure, was the man who surveyed the South Atlantic run from Natal to Khartoum, Cairo, Bagdad, and Jerusalem. He was in Assam early in April of 1942, and made the first flight over the Hump soon afterward. It is necessary to see Chabua and Sadiya, the town at the end of the Bengal-Assam railroad, and to live in these places in order to grasp any idea of the hazards faced by pioneer fliers on the aerial "Burma Road."

Of the sixty-four planes utilized during the first eight months, seventeen were wrecked, shot down, lost, or otherwise broken up and parts salvaged for other planes. There were only the most rudimentary airstrips for landing fields, and few competent mechanics or communication facili-



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GRAZING CATTLE HELP CAMOUFLAGE LOCATION OF CG'S PRIMARY TRAINER. *(BELOW)* BRIG. GEN. EDWARD H. ALEXANDER *(RIGHT)* AND LT. COL. R. T. KIGHT



ties. The route was a narrow strip rising from a tea plantation, then high across the 14,000-foot pass through the Himalayas to Kunming. Any deviation to the west along the route brought a crash into the tallest mountains of the world, and one to the east meant flying for two hours over Jap-occupied territory—and without radio beams to serve as navigation guides. Supplies from the United States, thanks to Rommel's desert army and the Nazi submarines in the Atlantic, were maddeningly uncertain. There were never enough planes, enough supplies, or enough men. It was a heartbreaking job, long and seemingly impossible, but finally it was done and done successfully.

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The India-China wing, one of the nine in Air Transport Command's globe-encircling operations, was organized in December, 1942, with Col. (now Brigadier General) Edward H. Alexander in command. The experience gained from the previous eight months aided them in reorganizing and making improvements, and from that time to February of 1943 the tonnage transported between India and China tripled. Today, ATC is carrying more military cargo over the Hump than formerly was carried over the Burma Road. Neither monsoons nor tornado snowstorms cancel flying schedules over the roof of the world. Communications still are undergoing improvement, airfields are without hangars, repair crews often must work at night because of the intense heat of the day, and gasoline is often carried to the planes in 5-gallon cans on the heads of natives. The magnitude of the accomplishment is revealed by the following: Of the 1,200 war decorations awarded up to January 1944, to Air Transport Command personnel, more than 900 were conferred upon men of the India-China wing. In addition, President Roosevelt cited the personnel of the ICW with a special award, precedent-breaking in that it was the first noncombat group to have ever been so decorated, and the largest group ever presented with a blanket citation.

The first night at the base a few of the officers and I sat in the humid lounge of Chotta Bungalow watching the night insects flitting about. It seemed a fitting occasion, so I produced a bottle of Scotch bought in Miami and set it on the table. I was baffled by the complete silence which followed the bottle's appearance, and I wondered if inadvertently I had



HITCHHIKING ON ASSAM'S HIGHWAY NO. 1. *(BELOW)* MAIL CALL — EVENT OF THE DAY



ENTIRE FAMILY HELPS PLOUGH RICE PADDIE. NATIVES RAISE TWO CROPS PER YEAR



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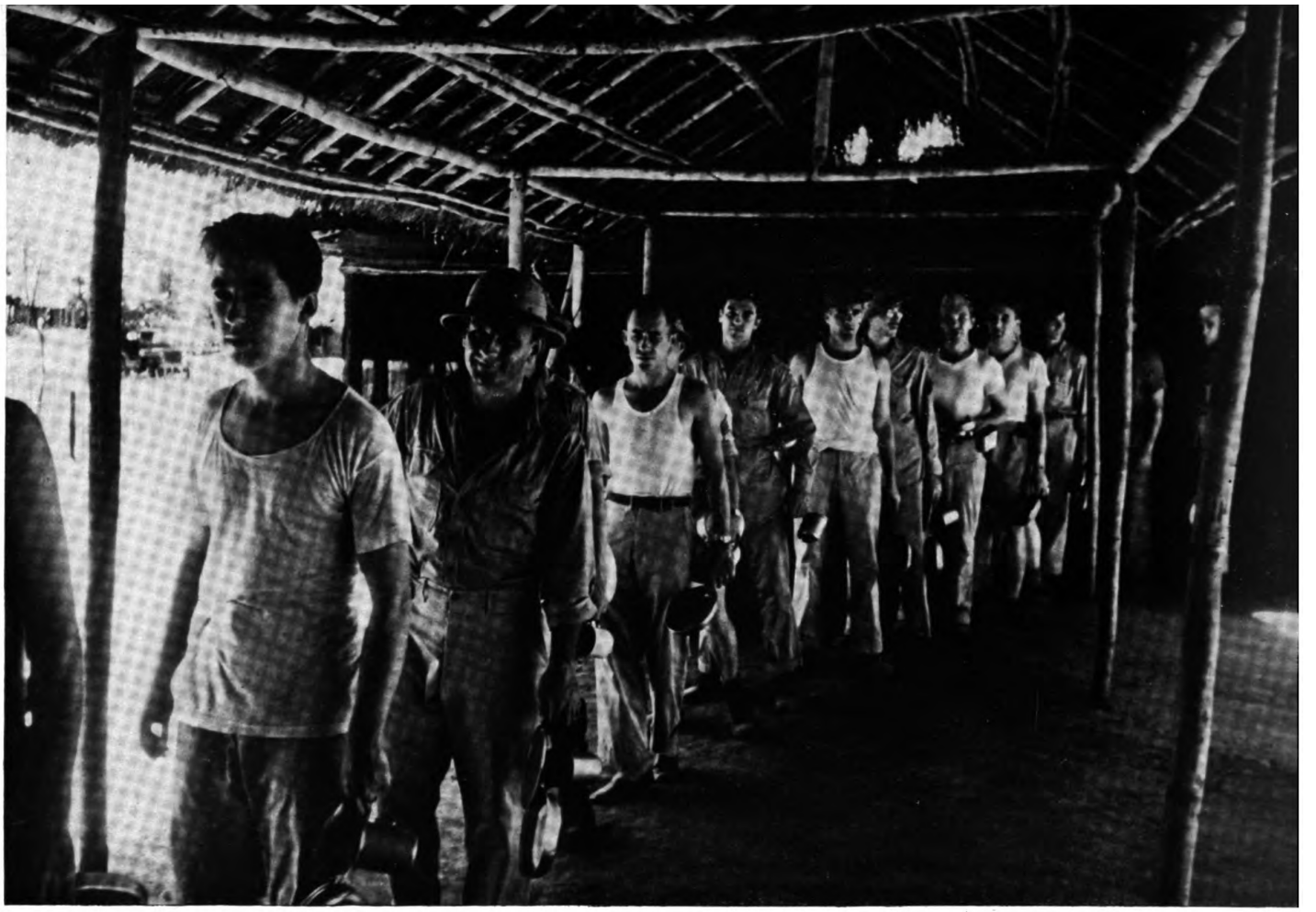
General Joseph Stilwell and guest at officers' mess, Chabua. (*below*) Hindu attempts sale of fish to Maj. St. Clair McKelway, ATC Public Relations Officer.



broken one of their regulations. I was about to inquire if this were so when Maj. E. Z. Berman, formerly a lawyer from New York City, broke the embarrassing silence and said in an awed voice: "Let's just look at it for a while." These men, some of whom had been stationed for as long as two years, and none less than one year, in a climate demanding the daily consumption of quarts of liquid, had seen nothing but chlorinated and lemon-flavored water during that entire time. Now, increasing their enjoyment by prolonging the anticipation, they sat and looked at my bottle for fully half an hour before opening it. I wished devoutly I had brought more, but we trickled it out by the thimbleful, making it last as long as possible. When finally the bottle was empty, Capt. James A. Kehoe, liaison officer with the Naga tribesmen, placed it on a shelf as a curiosity.

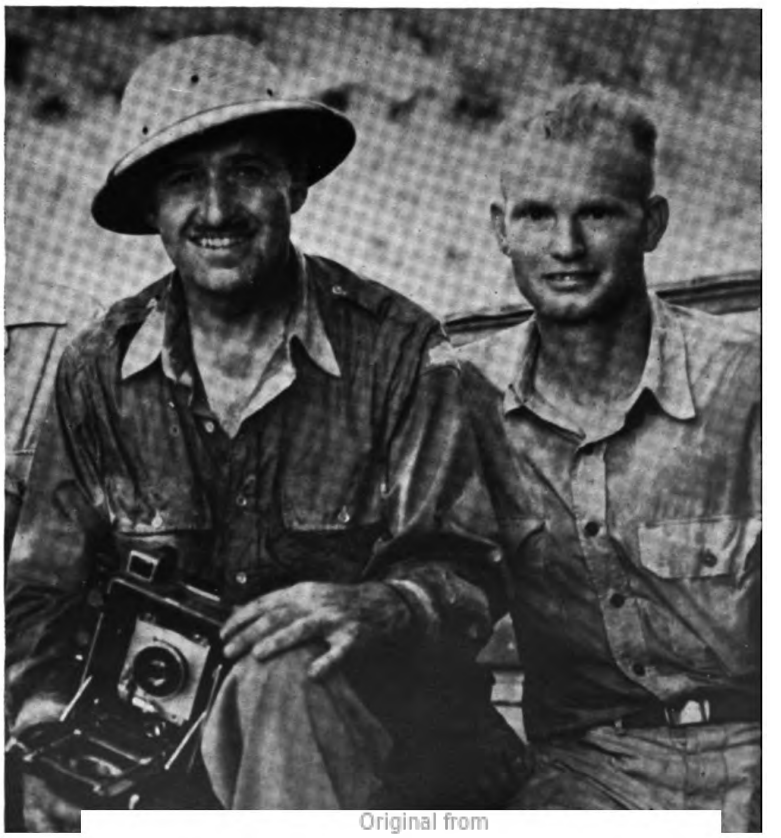
Japs were fairly close to this base, just over the Naga Hills, only about 80 miles away. They had not been attacking very recently, although our planes had been bombing them constantly. Sammie told me about a Nip raid in October of 1942 when his closest friend, Capt. Chas. W. Dunning, had been killed. When word had come of the Japs' approach, the captain, endeavoring to warn an unarmed transport that Tojo's boys were on the way, took off in a P-40. It was a desperate gamble. The Zeros outnumbered him forty to one, and although he never reached the transport, the diversion was protracted just long enough to enable the unarmed cargo plane to land safely. In another raid, four months later, forty-two Jap planes came over and were met by our forces of thirty-three fighting P-40's. The story now was dif-

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Whether the menu says meat pie, hash, or stew—it's still the same canned corned beef. Thatched roof connects mess hall with kitchen.

Mildewed film, fogged lens, corroded shutters. Veteran jungle photographer, Sgt. Willie McGee (S. Dak.) (*right*), assists Dmitri.



ferent. We got fourteen Nippon ships and thirty possibles, without loss of a single man.

During the building of the installations at the Base, "Photo Joe," a Jap aviator, came over daily to get pictures, and the Americans, for quite some time, had been unable to bring him down. Captain Goff one day stripped a P-40 of all excess weight and Lieutenant Streit took it up to 17,000 feet, dove down on the Nipponese camera man, and fired fifty-four rounds of ammunition. Photo Joe had taken his last picture.

The men were surprised one noon to see General (Iron Joe) Stilwell and a number of Chinese officers drop in for lunch. It is a rare occasion when the General leaves his men at the front lines in the jungles. He was on an inspection trip to check on supplies of men and matériel.

The "Indian Military Labor Battalion" is

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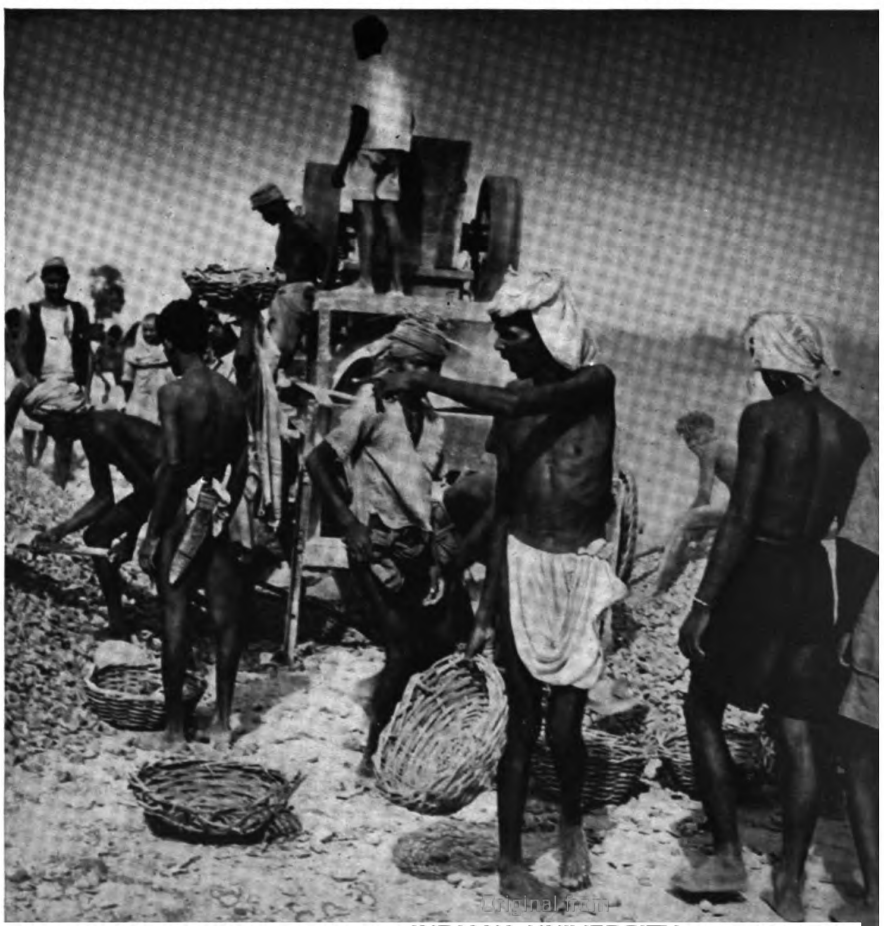
STILL ON PAY ROLL OF PLANTATION OWNERS WHO ARE REIMBURSED BY GOVERNMENT, THESE EX-TEA PICKERS WORK ON CONSTRUCTION OF INSTALLATIONS



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BENGAL-ASSAM EXPRESS AVERAGING FOUR MILES PER HOUR BRINGS SUPPLIES FOR CHINA. *(BELOW)* IMPORTED ROCK-CRUSHER SPEEDS CONSTRUCTION

the lengthy name bestowed upon the small army of natives at work almost constantly on the building of airports and on the "hard-standing areas," where the heavy cargo planes are parked. These men formerly worked in the local "tea gardens" that somewhat resemble the old Southern plantations in the states. Originally the gardens had been cut right out of the jungle country which nestled at the foothills of the Himalayas. For the most part they are owned and operated by large English corporations. The general managers and their families usually live in a handsome bungalow, while assistants and the engineers have comparable if less elaborate homes. The native workers receive a dole of rice in addition to their wages, which are low. They are little better off than slave labor, except that the



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HAND HOLDING BETWEEN MEN IS A COMMON PRACTICE IN INDIA. THE GI IS INSTRUCTED TO REFRAIN FROM RIDICULING THE ODD NATIVE CUSTOMS

tea planters customarily pension their people after about thirty years of service. Also, each of the great tea gardens has its own school, hospital, and general store, as well as administration buildings. Since war came to Assam, however, the United States Army has the use of many of the bungalows, bashas, and other buildings.

The plantation owners promised their workers that there would be no advance in the prices of rice or other food commodities during the war, and although the costs have risen, this agreement has been maintained. Workers also continue to receive free housing and free medical care. The English early discovered that the Indian native who received too much for his labor soon refused to work. He has little need for money and after accumulating a small amount, he prefers to "retire." Sometimes rice lands are leased to natives for as little as one rupee (thirty cents) a year. I learned from one worker that he and his two sisters, each owning land, between them were making thirty rupees a month. But apparently no matter how much they make, the natives continue on the same low level, have little ambition, and no desire to change their status. Even after becoming "rich," in the native sense, they have no craving for more comfortable establishments. Their money is buried in the ground, they trust no one, neither fellow countrymen nor the British Post Office. They think that earnings put into postal savings remain there and should the post office burn, the money would burn, too.

The Brahman remains the elite of Hindu society. Although found in many occupations, in Assam they are particularly valuable as cooks. Under caste rules, food prepared by them may be eaten by members of other castes, but the reverse is not true. So strict are the rules that if a Brahman's food is touched by a person of a lower caste, it becomes unfit to eat.

Of the 200,000,000 cows in India, not one has the slightest respect for motor traffic. Although mouths may water at the thought of "steaks on the hoof," the beasts are a poor looking lot, starved because of insufficient fodder. The Army man must be cautious in driving as in some areas the penalty for killing a cow, even by accident, may be as much as seven years in prison.

General E. H. Alexander, Commanding Officer of the India-China Wing of ATC, kept his own little plane, a Primary Trainer, parked in a convenient shed for use in hopping around to

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the different bases. He generously offered me its services so that I might obtain some aerial photographs of the jungle country, and one day Col. Richard T. Kight, who had piloted Wendell Willkie around the world, flew me in it out over the rice paddies and the flooding Brahmaputra. From the air, the whole country looked green and inviting and we almost forgot that below sweating men were panting for cool dry air and for a few comforts and diversions such as the Red Cross might have provided had the Assam bases not been so isolated. Under the deceptive loveliness were the loneliest men, perhaps, of any air base in the world.

Another time Maj. Warren (Squabby) Vine, a former American Airlines pilot and a friend of mine, took the PT's controls. After shooting some pictures of cargo-ship take-offs for China, we dropped in to visit with some of the pilots flying "the roughest, toughest route in the world," to use their own expression.

That 450-mile flight may take three hours or several, depending upon wind and luck. Frequently visibility is zero and instruments are utilized throughout most of the trip. The take-off may occur in a sweltering 125-degree temperature, then after a rapid five-mile climb to clear the jagged mountain peaks, the plane meets sub-zero temperatures, necessitating oxygen masks and winter flying clothes. In addition, the Japs send out patrol fighter ships to attack the unarmed cargo planes and in many instances these Jap sorties have been tragically successful.

The 14th Air Force in China, under Major General Claire L. Chennault, was carrying on its famous aerial guerrilla warfare, as were several American heavy bombardment groups. To





Airplane engines arrive in Assam "pickled" in grease and wrapped in Cellophane. (*below*) Lieuts. Willis, Lichtenfels, and McCall watch loading of bombs for China.

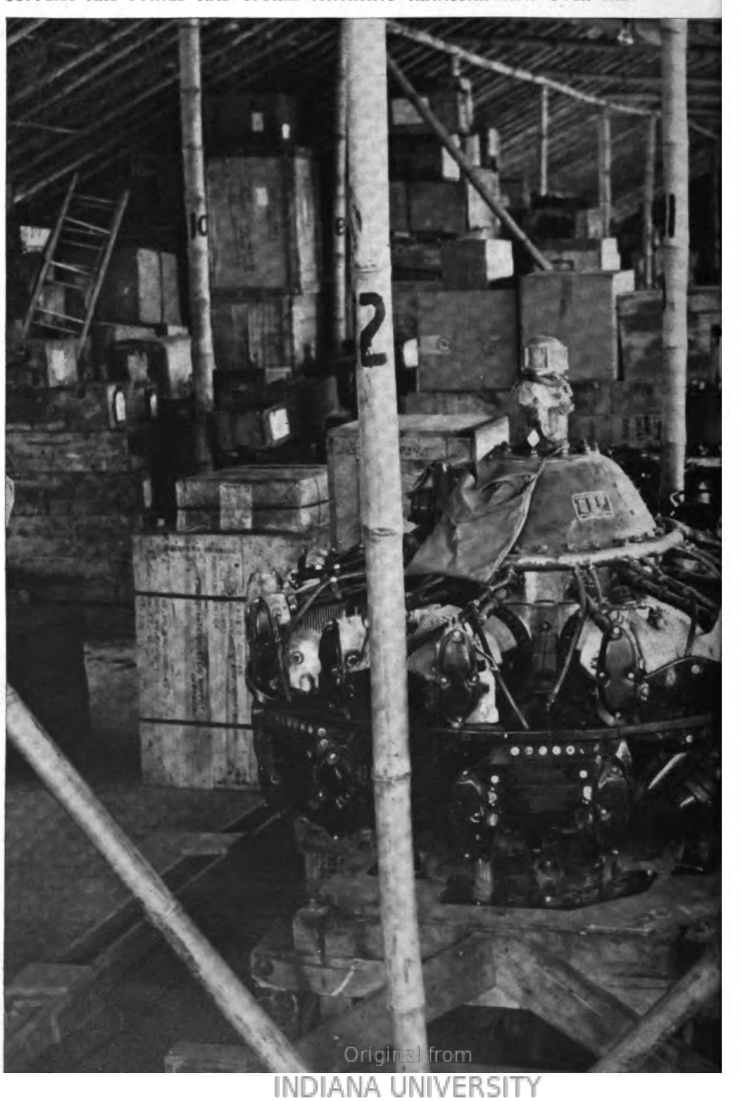
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A TYPICAL AIR FREIGHT DEPOT OF ATC AT CHABUA WHERE VITAL WAR SUPPLIES ARE SORTED AND STORED AWAITING TRANSSHIPMENT OVER THE





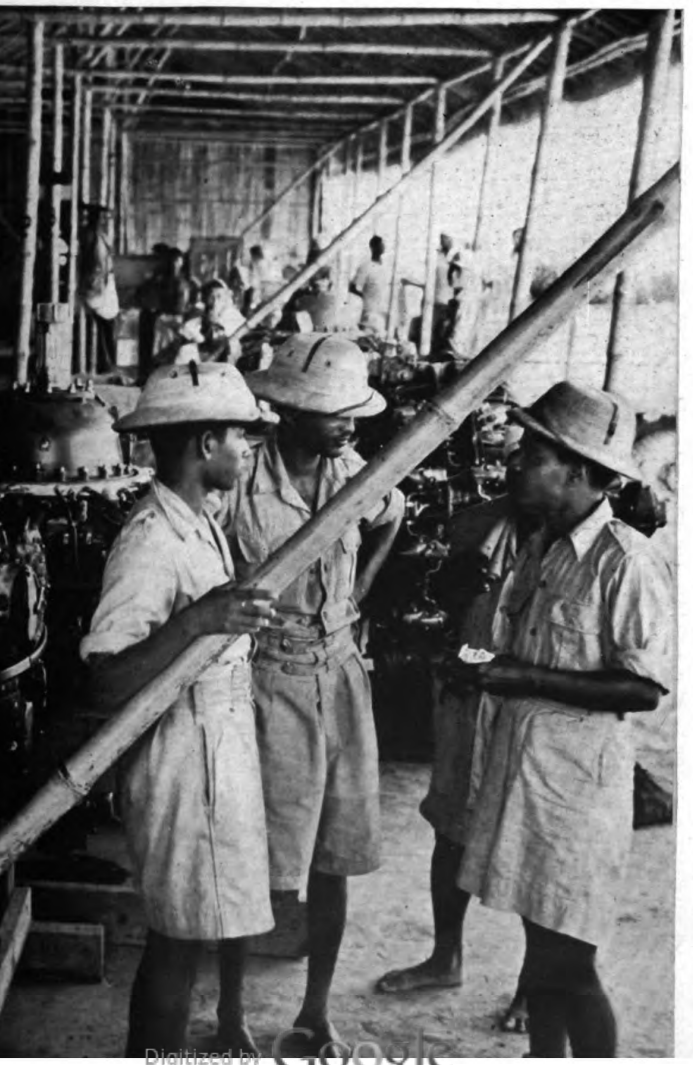
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HUMP TO CHINA. ENGLISH-SPEAKING INDIANS ARE IN CHARGE OF NATIVE HELP AND TRANSLATE INSTRUCTIONS OF AMERICAN WAREHOUSEMEN





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Lieut. J. B. Rogers of New York (*right*) chats with fellow ATC pilots on veranda. (*below*) A souvenir for the folks back home.





PILOTS AWAIT CLEARANCE ORDERS OUTSIDE OPERATIONS OFFICE AT CHABUA

supply these forces, every machine-gun bullet, bomb, gallon of gasoline, quart of lubricating oil, and every other item needed by those forces had to be flown in over the Hump. As General Arnold disclosed: "This problem of supply to China has been perhaps the greatest single challenge to the efficiency of the Air Forces. . . . A C-87 Liberator transport must consume three and one-half tons of 100-octane gasoline flying the Hump over the Himalaya Mountains between Assam and Kunming, getting four tons through to the 14th Air Force. Before a bombardment group in China can go on a single mission in its B-24 Liberators, it must fly the Hump four times to build up its supplies."

To help solve their own fuel problems, many bomber crews flew their ships over the Hump between missions and picked up enough gasoline and bombs for the next visit to the enemy.

One of those bombers, the "Pelican," based at Kunming, China, had flown the Hump 36 times in five months. This was in addition to the bombing missions, on one of which the "Pelican" sighted and strafed some Japs in Indo-China from an altitude of only 400 feet. Another time the crew strafed and sank a seaplane in the South China Sea.

"On one trip back from China," said pilot Lieut. J. H. Keene, "we went to 28,000 feet and right into solid, overcast weather. The ship started icing and soon our radio compass went out. We knew we were some place over the field,

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IN COOLER EVENING HOURS MECHANICS WORK ON LIB'S 1,200-HP. ENGINE

and we fooled around for a half hour trying to find a hole in the clouds. Then we gradually descended, thinking we were in the valley. At 13,000 feet a peak suddenly appeared directly in front of us. We missed that one by a few feet."

"Yes," broke in copilot, Lieut. S. F. Tomkovick, "and my old ticker missed ten good beats right there. We thought sure we were lost and kept on flying for an hour and a half until Sergeant Moran, he's our radioman, finally got the QDM. That's the radio bearing flashed from the ground."

"By that time," went on Lieutenant Keene, "we had just ten minutes gas supply left, and we were ready to hit the silk. However, we swung around at about 600 feet and tried coming in on the final approach, but we lost the field and had to climb back again to 2000. The next time, and how I still don't know, we landed safely."

Then there was the "Snowball From Hell," whose crew had flown her from the states five months previously. Three of the crew members, Lieuts. Richard G. Willis, Indiana; James J. Lichtenfels, Ohio; and John V. McCall, Texas, told me that during one of their thirty-five trips over the Hump to pick up supplies, they hit such a perilous down-draft that they dropped a thousand feet in three seconds. Everything in the ship flew up and hit the ceiling, and every man literally sat on air. Another time, ten inches of ice gathered on the top side of the wings, the ailerons constantly froze and had to be wrenched



Chinese-based B-24's often must fly to Assam for bombs and ammunition. (*below*) A pound or a ton—ATC flies it wherever needed.



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COLLAPSIBLE BUCKET SEATS ARE DROPPED TO MAKE ROOM FOR CARGO

free, and icicles formed on the radio antenna. Despite all, the ship continued its flight. In a third instance they had brought their plane safely back to their Chinese base on two engines, both right wing.

But the bombers have no monopoly on misadventures encountered when flying the Hump. While we were talking, a transport arrived from China. The pilot told me they had hit a thunderhead which tossed them about; they flew upside-down for some time. Later, when they were reaching clear weather, a Jap Zero had chased them, but they had streaked into fortuitous clouds and escaped. The sole protection of unescorted ATC pilots when encountering Japs is to "beat it for the clouds."

In these days, transport planes sometimes have fighter-plane protection, and a specially trained rescue squadron has performed miracles, but in the pioneer stage conditions seemed all but hopeless. Project *X*, which so mystified the boys I had met on the first stage of the trip, could not be revealed to the public for a long time, not until it was safely under way, when Project *X-a* was determined. For four months it was the cherished baby and constant headache of American civilians ordinarily engaged in commercial aviation. It involved establishing other bases in India from which to augment the flow of supplies already being flown to China. At Chabua, the base at which I spent most of my time, life was pretty well organized. The first flight over the Hump had been made in 1942, eighteen months before

SPENCERIAN COILS OF SPRAY ARE FORMED BY PROPELLERS RACING AT TOP SPEED AS C-87 LIBERATOR EXPRESS ROARS ACROSS RAIN-SOAKED AIRSTRIP



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MODERN FOUR-ENGINED TRANSPORT, HEAVILY LOADED WITH SUPPLIES FOR BELEAGUERED CHINESE FORCES, TAKES OFF FROM UPPER ASSAM AIRPORT

my arrival at Assam. What the pioneers at Chabua went through was comparable to the trials that the civilian pilots, mechanics, and other personnel of American Airlines experienced in carrying out Project *X-a*. Some of those tribulations were graphically described in their confidential reports to the company by Division Superintendent J. D. (Ted) Lewis as well as by other American Airlines pilots and personnel who had experienced them.

"Tired, rain-soaked, and half sick," stated Lewis, "the first crew arrived at the India base ten days after a phone call from Washington set the machinery of the project in motion. The monsoon season was at its height. The heat was intolerable. The camp was a mudhole, and the airport was little better. Goats and Brahman cows were still in possession of the barracks. Despite



→ THEIR SHIP LOADED, FLIGHT CREW ARRIVES BY JEEP TO BOARD PLANE

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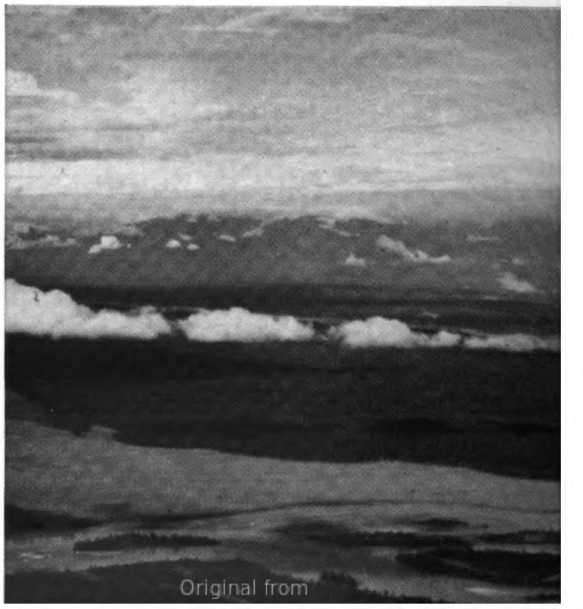
EXTENSIVE TEA GARDENS WERE CARVED OUT OF THE JUNGLES OF ASSAM YEARS AGO. SHADE TREES ARE PLANTED FOR PROTECTION OF TENDER TEA PLANTS

all this, our first plane went over the Hump the following day with a load of ammunition for beleaguered China. It took two weeks for all the C-87's assigned to the project to arrive, but it took just one day for every plane to get into action. Those were trying days. Even after the cows and goats were driven out of barracks, the boys never knew when they might wake up to find one

WOMEN TEA PICKERS REPLACE MEN NOW AT WORK CONSTRUCTING ATC INSTALLATIONS



ASSAM'S JUNGLE VALLEY, ONLY 300 FEET ABOVE SEA



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SWAMPY RICE PADDIES IN THE CLEARINGS, BUT THICK JUNGLE GROWTH SERVES IDEALLY TO CAMOUFLAGE PURSUIT PLANES LURKING AT ITS FRINGES

staring them in the face. Runways were flooded, and lighted at first only by gasoline flares. Later, when the rains stopped, the animals chose the runways as their favorite grounds. Often jeeps had to clear them out before a plane could take off. Flight crews had to learn to fly the Hump on instruments with few navigational facilities available. Maintenance men had to keep

LEVEL, BECOMES INUNDATED DURING MONSOON SEASON



WATER BUFFALOES OF INDIA ARE FEROCIOUS, HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO ATTACK JEEPS



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BRITISH-EDUCATED SIKHS ARE USUALLY OVERSEERS OF NATIVE LABORERS

the planes on schedule with no spare parts other than those which our planes had taken over, with no shelter from rains, no lighting facilities for night work, and no workstands except some makeshifts built of bamboo. Those proved too fragile to withstand the heavy winds, so empty oil drums were welded one on top of the other and footholds cut in the sides to enable the mechanics to climb up to reach the engine.

"As recreation was needed to offset the strain, baseball teams were organized. They played every afternoon. You didn't slide for second base; you dived for it through two feet of water. And the cows and goats got off third base just long enough for you to get on it, and then resumed their grazing when you ducked for the home plate. No one ever thought of going after a ball which had gone out of bounds because of the krait, a deadly poisonous snake.

"Bathing was very simple in the early monsoon days. You just walked out into a downpour with a cake of soap, lathered yourself from head to foot, and then stood there, whistling in nature's shower, while a river of rain rinsed you off. The system failed sometimes, however, when the rain stopped just as you got yourself nicely lathered up. Getting the natives to take a bath was another matter.

"With the passing of the rainy season, flight schedules went on a 24-hour basis, and it seemed as though some of the boys never did get any time to sleep, for planes were taking off before dawn and returning by moonlight. At the height of our operations we were averaging almost six round trips per day. During the entire four months we made 1,075 crossings of the Hump and carried millions of pounds of cargo, mostly bombs and gasoline, into China.

"On every man's lips when he returned was the story of Toby Hunt, beloved captain who went down with his ship after his crew had jumped to safety. Unable to make a landing in China because of the weather, Captain Hunt was returning to base to refuel when engine trouble developed over the mountains. They found his body in the wreckage of his plane only 20 miles from base. Had he tried to make those last few miles and save his plane, instead of jumping to safety himself? No one will ever know, but we salute a gallant gentleman and a great flier.

"This was not Captain Hunt's first rendezvous with death; he missed by only a hair's-breadth the first time. Flying on instruments 20,000 feet over the Hump a few weeks earlier, Captain Hunt found he could not hold altitude because of ice. The load had to be lightened. Back to the cabin went the crew, without oxygen, to release the cargo door. Even after the safety catches had been pulled, the door still jammed. Then big Wes Witte, Navigator, picked up Flight Engineer Taggart, held him chest high so he could use both legs as battering rams. The door gave way. Still without oxygen, the men wrestled fourteen full drums of fuel to the open door and sent them hurtling into the mists below. Both crew and plane were saved. Toby's day had not yet come. Let science explain, if it can, what took

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the place of oxygen for that heroic crew.

"The Army took over the operations December 1, 1943, and the last ship we had been operating left India that day for New York. The project had ended. We are proud that we were asked to do it and we think we did a good job. But there isn't a man who doesn't admit that it would have been impossible without the friendly cooperation of the Army, who helped us from the moment we landed, tired and rain-soaked that August day, until our last ship took off in December."

Naturally, there was much more to the story, but those few excerpts clearly and vividly show the high degree of cooperative effort reached and maintained by Army and commercial aviation.

Transports had been bringing Chinese soldiers to Assam on return trips over the Hump. A few divisions in upper Assam were being trained for jungle warfare. They were taught to make booby traps out of jungle materials, using the slender bamboo shoots, called *punje,* and vines for trip wires. They dug pits five or six feet deep and filled them with two-foot lengths of the punje which had been sharpened to needle-like points that protruded upward, so that the bottom of the pit resembled a porcupine's back. Sometimes a deadly poison is put on the tips of the punje.

The pits are an old war trick of the Gurkhas, who come from the independent kingdom of Nepal on the northeast frontier of India. Gurkhas have a well-implanted military tradition. The British encourage them to volunteer in the Indian Army. They are known for their friendly jovial attitude and faithfulness, their spirit of close camaraderie with English sol-



Time was once unimportant to Assam's natives; now plane schedules demand punctuality. (*below*) Gurkha warriors from Nepal are faithful and alert guards.



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diers, and their particular keenness for sports, especially soccer and field hockey. One day we watched the Gurkhas in drill and their precision was splendid. These stalwart fellows take great pride in their work and training. Their enthusiasm is so great that back in their native country they often drill by themselves. They carry rifles, light machine guns, grenades, and those deadly Kukri knives which they wield with complete effectiveness.

On a morning when weather reports were more favorable than usual, I was invited to go along on a check flight. We arranged to accompany one of the C-87 cargo planes part way over the Hump. Anxious as I was to obtain pictures of the route, I accepted with misgivings, knowing how sudden changes in weather could conspire to obliterate the towering snow-capped peaks that I was anxious to photograph. About twenty minutes after take-off we caught up with the "Dysentery Special" and flew beside her for some distance. She had two names—on her left side she was painted "Allergic to Combat," on her right "Dysentery Special." Had I been similarly labeled that morning, I could not conscientiously have sued for libel.

The Hump was in a reasonably genial mood and although we, in the photographic plane, were rudely tossed about, thrown this way and that by up and downdrafts and criss-cross winds, soon I began actually to enjoy the flight.

There was a delightful sense of aloofness from everything in the world. We flew in and out of great masses of majestic clouds; others floated above and below us. Scar-faced, jungle-capped peaks suddenly

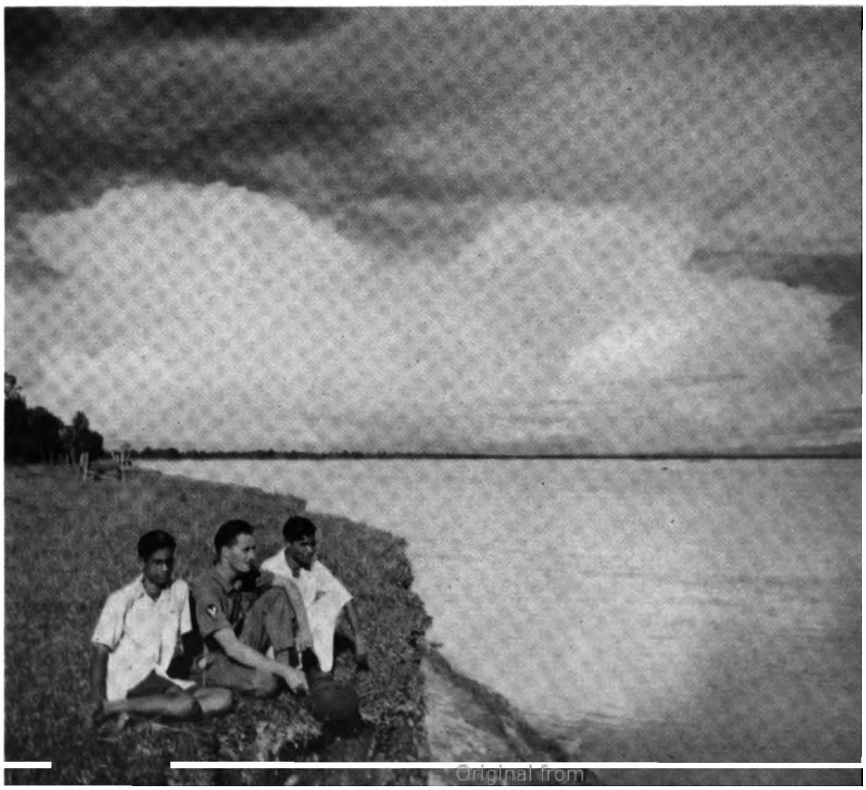


BLIND FLYING, ICING CONDITIONS, AND VICIOUS UPDRAFTS CHALLENGE ATC PILOTS

jutted up through the mist—and as suddenly disappeared. There was exhilaration, too, such as I had experienced several years ago in a flight over the Andes, when air routes in that region were young and hazardous. Too soon, we were enveloped in solid mist, and as further photography was out of the question, our plane returned to base.

For well over a year the Japs had been frustrated in their attempts to cut the Bengal-Assam railroad. The forces of General Stilwell and his Chinese and British allies were breaking these enemy drives and were chasing them from the jungle of north Burma. Nipponese planes, however, continued within range of the never-ending sky-train of

PERILOUS ROUTE TO CHINA IS THROUGH AND BEYOND THESE SEEMINGLY PEACEFUL CLOUDS



← **Monsoons over the Hump.** Four hours of thunderheads, air currents, and hidden Himalayan peaks.

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MAJ. FRANCIS E. BRENNER OF KANSAS *(LEFT)* AND MAJ. EMILE ZOLA BERMAN OF N. Y.

ATC cargo planes carrying supplies into China. These unarmed transports seldom had fighter protection because of an insufficiency of combat planes.

A small but effective pursuit group augmented by an excellent plane-spotting system operated ceaselessly. Air warning spotters were stationed at strategic points in the jungle and dispersed along the route as far from the base as was practicable. These stations, perforce, are isolated and the little groups of men, supplied regularly by parachute, remain at them for weeks, often months at a time. Each post was equipped with radio for communication with headquarters.

The control room at headquarters is thick with maps and charts. On a huge table is a large scale map upon which the area and the route over the Hump have been laid out. Superimposed over the map is a network of squares, delineating the spotter system. Night and day this office is on active duty, standing by for a radio message reporting the approach of enemy planes. The first report probably will come from one of the more distant posts, the second from a nearer station, and so on. After two or three calls have come in and been checked with the squares on the plotting board, the fighter squadron, which was alerted by telephone immediately upon receipt of the first message, is notified of the probable route of the enemy.

The P-40's, which comprised the strength of a Fighter Group, under Capt. Wynn D. Miller from Columbia, Mo., were dispersed at various small airfields. These locations are *fields* in the true sense of the word, for they are well camouflaged with a natural growth of grass about two feet high. The planes are concealed in thick jungle foliage. At the signal from headquarters, the fighters from one or more of the detachments best situated strategically to the enemy's course, as indicated on the spotting table, take to the air to intercept the Japs. Men of a fighter squadron are constantly on the alert, and pilots are on daily duty from 4:30 A.M. to 7 P.M.

The Pursuit Group also furnished cover for transport planes over dangerous territories and made routine patrols over the Naga Hills in order to keep the Japs at bay. On one such patrol, while flying low over a jungle valley, Captain Miller and five of his P-40's were attracted by peculiar flashes of light glistening through the foliage; it was the reflection of the sun on the windshields of some trucks. They circled and counted a parade of fifteen vehicles transporting Japanese troops and supplies farther north toward the American bases. Captain Miller signaled and dived. The others followed instantly and opened fire. The trucks ran into ditches and soon nothing providing any future threat was left of the Jap detachment. For good measure, following that skirmish, the fighters located and sank two Japanese river boats.

To Capt. Wynn Miller the seventh of December will always stand for something even more than Pearl Harbor. Exactly one year after the Japs attacked the Harbor, Captain Miller was forced to parachute from his disabled P-40 at an

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SPOTTERS' REPORTS ARE RECEIVED AND ROUTES PLOTTED ON CENTRAL CONTROL BOARD. FIGHTER GROUPS ARE ADVISED BY PHONE OF ENEMY APPROACH

altitude of 15,000 feet over the mountains of northern Burma. He had been in command of a group of fighters flying top cover for the cargo ships traversing the Hump at an 18,000-foot level and over a solid overcast of clouds.

The captain handed me a worn clipping from his home-town paper and also gave me a verbal account of his experience.

"I realized it was time for me to switch gas tanks," he said, "and as I did so the engine cut out and the fuel pressure dropped. The capacity indicator told me I was losing gas rapidly. I opened the canopy to let the fumes out of the cockpit and got a spray of gasoline in my face, which meant a broken fuel line from the main tank. The engine was running on the auxiliary; I had ten to twenty minutes of flying time left.

"After ordering the planes in my flight to continue on course, I headed



←CONTROL OFFICER, MAJ. H. T. WRIGHT OF MIAMI *(RIGHT)*

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Keen competition exists between rival Gurkha field hockey teams at Sadiya, India. (*below*) Walls of plyboard, sheets, and screens make modern jungle home.



Fleets of trucks constantly ply over dusty main highway between Chabua and various airfields transporting native workers, supplies, and equipment.



north and started climbing. I wanted to get as close to friendly territory as possible before jumping. I've been flying single-engine fighter planes for three years and this bailing out business was nothing new, but before it had always been over Long Island or Texas. This time it was over Jap territory in Burma, and with overcast so thick, I could see nothing below.

"My engine stopped when the plane had reached about 15,000 feet. To test whether I was in danger of hitting the tail of the ship when bailing out, I let slip a piece of paper through the canopy. It went right straight into the tail. At that instant a mountain stuck its portentous peak through the overcast, and I had no choice. I jumped—and fast—but, like the paper, straight for the tail, which hit me a glancing blow on the back and started me spinning through the air.

"I pulled the rip cord and nothing happened for a century," continued the captain. "But finally it opened and I floated down through clouds and rain, completely unable to discern when or where I should land. While examining my arms and legs for injuries, I crashed into a banana tree, which bent with my weight, but softened the fall on my back. I was in the middle of a 6-foot jungle trail and immediately heard the sounds of people coming toward me. I lay quietly, listening and probing to discover if I was hurt. Then the crackling of leaves and branches ceased and I looked up into the faces of numerous and inquisitive monkeys. I sat and watched them until I got enough strength to start walking."

He fumbled in his junglepack for a compass, and started to work his way up the mountainside in the general direction of what he believed to be

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Supply ships return after parachuting food and medical supplies to jungle combat troops and enemy plane spotters dispersed at vantage spots along the Himalayan route. (*below*) Capt. Wynn D. (Windy) Miller interrogates stranger crossing restricted area.

friendly territory. It had been mid-morning when the plane failed, and the flyer trekked up and over the jungle mountainside all afternoon before seeing a human being. Suddenly, a stirring in the grass about 150 yards away attracted him and the captain yelled several times, but there was no answer.

"Thinking it was an animal," he continued, "I started again to follow the almost imperceptible trail when an unexpected 'Hi!' from behind halted me. Wheeling, I saw a native in the bushes aiming a shotgun. I threw up both hands and started yelling everything I could think of that meant 'friend.' That fellow just sat and held the gun. Then, and I'll never know



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ON PORCH OF MISSION BUNGALOW, FIGHTER PILOTS ARE ENTERTAINED BY BURMESE EVACUEES AND MARY I. LAUGHLIN, MISSIONARY FROM HURON, S. DAK.

why, I smiled, and the native with the gun smiled in return, lowered his weapon, and came out of the brush. We had a long talk, neither of us knowing what the other was saying. You never could be quite certain which side the natives were on, for the Japs had offered rewards for capture of American airmen, but we had done our best to get them to help us."

Finally the captain made the native understand he was hungry, and the Indian led him down the trail for an hour or so when they encountered another native. The two escorts led Miller to some advance pickets of a British V-Force Army, whose business was to intercept roving Japs in the jungle. The commanding officer informed him that he had only 200 miles of walking before he would find transportation by water to a railroad. Equipped with a guide and three pack mules, the flyer left the British base December 13 and came to the river eight days later. "At each village we passed through," concluded the captain, "I was met with smiles and the greeting, 'Airplane Boy Sahib,' for the word had passed ahead that I was coming through."

FIGHTER SQUADRON EMBLEM DESIGNED BY FORMER WALT DISNEY ARTIST



The experiences of Captain Miller, with variations, have been repeated scores of times amidst that dangerous stretch of jungle that lies so far below the air route to Kunming; not always, however, with such a happy ending.

Air crews in Assam wear American flags sewed to the backs of their shirts or jackets. Underneath each flag is a carefully folded, large scale map of the area, printed on silk. For protection, every flyer carries a shoulder-holstered .45 and a heavy Kukri knife. This knife of the ferocious Gurkhas

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has a curved blade 18 inches long and is one of the deadliest implements ever invented for hand-to-hand fighting. Most of our boys on flight missions over Burma are equipped with a jungle kit. In addition to the Kukri knife it contains concentrated food rations and a first-aid kit, as well as a supply of salt. Natives are always in need of salt and it is often used as payment for services. It is useful in making palatable any game killed by a fallen airman while awaiting rescue. Also it is a protection against the dreaded leeches, hanging from every vine and tree throughout the jungles. When salt is sprinkled on an attacking leech, it voluntarily withdraws its head.

One day when Capt. Miller and I were exploring in a jeep the upper Assam country, we discovered about ten miles from the base a wooden frame house such as might have been transferred intact from any small town in the United States, even to the large screened porch fronting the house. A charming woman, possibly in her late thirties, responded to our ring and invited us to enter. She was Miss Mary I. Laughlin, a Protestant missionary who had escaped with several students from their school at Rangoon in Burma two days ahead of the Japanese invasion. As many as could do so had left, going first to Myitkyina, thence to Assam. Now, with several Burmese, she was settled here to await the war's end.

Capt. Miller told her about the lonely men based but ten miles away and her sympathy instantly prompted her to invite a few of them to a small gathering the following day.

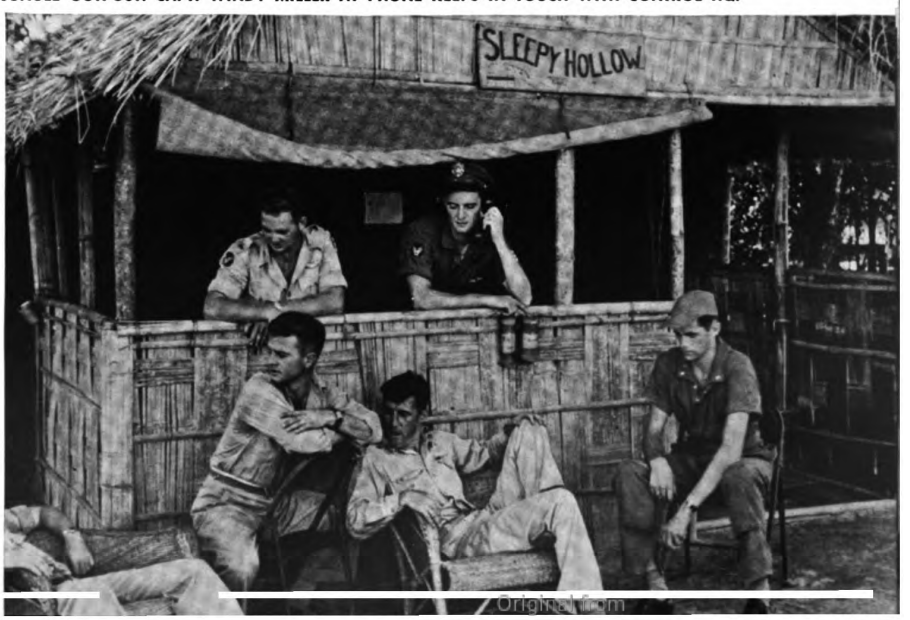
With these good tidings we sped back to the base only to be met by unbelieving stares. The men refused to be taken in by any yarn dealing with four beautiful young Burmese maidens and a party to be held in a comfortable home. In so forsaken a spot nothing like this could happen. The next day, off we went—a jeepful of men still dubious but afraid to miss anything.



BRIG. GEN. JOHN F. EGAN, CHIEF OF DEFENSE *(CENTER)*, DINES WITH "ASSAM DRAGONS"

We were welcomed on the veranda by our hostess and four bashful Burmese girls, immaculate in native dress. Gracefully concealing any qualms she might have entertained at bringing together these bold young Lochinvars and her naive charges, Miss Laughlin, nevertheless, was the complete chaperon. Two of the girls spoke English and

JUNGLE OUTPOST. CAPT. WINDY MILLER AT PHONE KEEPS IN TOUCH WITH CONTROL HQ.



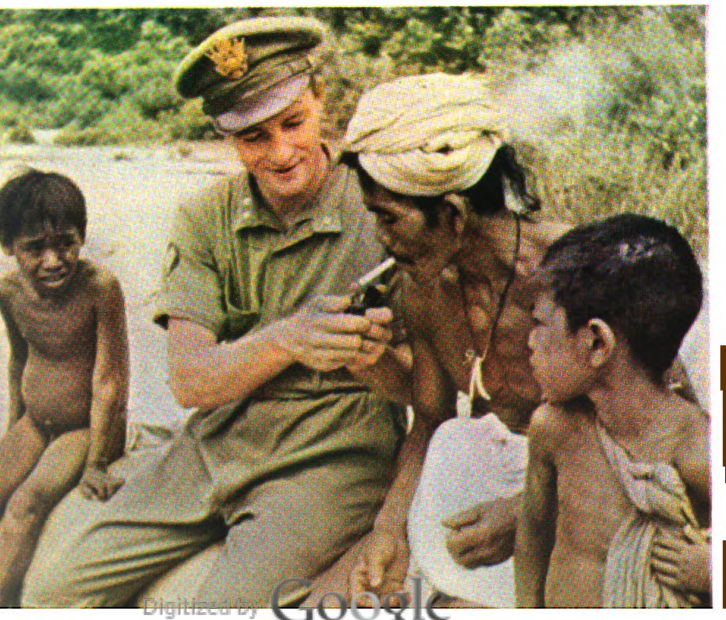
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FIGHTER PILOTS GATHERED ABOUT ALERT-TENT AT EDGE OF JUNGLE-CLEARED AIRSTRIP, AWAIT WORD FROM CONTROL HEADQUARTERS OF ENEMY APPROACH

told us their story of escape from the Japanese in Burma, and how they had first learned the use of revolver and shotgun.

Miss Laughlin astonished us by producing a bottle of Coca-Cola extract which she had safeguarded the entire distance of her escape. Although we had no ice, the drink was a treat even when served in warm chlorinated water.

YANKS BEFRIEND HILLMEN WHO GIVE INVALUABLE AID TO LOST AIR CREWS



LT. COL. D. W. WALLACE (ALA.) DUBIOUSLY EXAMINES "PRECIOUS" STONES



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CAMOUFLAGED WITH NATURAL JUNGLE GROWTH, DISPERSED FIGHTER PLANES ARE READY FOR IMMEDIATE TAKE-OFF UPON NOTIFICATION OF RED ALERT

After showing us through the basement classroom where the students carried on their studies of various Burmese dialects and English, we bade our farewells and returned to duties at the base and to boast of the beautiful women we had found hidden in the jungle.

One afternoon, we found some of the boys sitting around an alert-tent, engaged in one of their habitual gabfests about how soon would they be going home and what they would do after the war. There was a telephone at their elbow, their planes were fueled and parked at the edge of the jungle with loose branches arranged as additional camouflage. The guns were loaded and ready, and all that was necessary for instantaneous action was a tinkle of the telephone bell, warning of approaching danger, and their ships would be in the air. The boys must stand by even when flying conditions at the P-40 camp are at their worst, for often the storms are but local and the

R. W. GODFREY, BRITISH POLITICAL OFFICER *(RIGHT)*, MAINTAINS ORDER AMONG TRIBESMEN



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A FLYING SHARK IN THE TIGER COUNTRY. PILOTS DISCUSS WITH MAINTENANCE MEN MANEUVERABILITY OF "LIZ" VERSUS THAT OF "WHIP-TURNING" ZEROS

skies may be clear at the Nip bases. In discussing the whip-turn ability of the Jap Zeros, the boys agreed that the planes can "turn on a dime and have a nickel in change." Pilots who have not seen the Zeros in action refuse to believe the stories of their maneuverability until they have had the experience of chasing one and trying to get on his tail for the kill. The Japs, the boys explained, almost invariably make a sharp left turn and attack the pursuing fighters. Our pilots now anticipate this maneuver, shoot to the left of the Zero, which turns directly into the path of fire. When disabled, the Jap pilot dives straight for the ground with full throttle, meeting the water-soaked earth with such impact that both pilot and plane are buried 15 to 20 feet below the surface. It is fairly evident that the enemy pilots are instructed to take this suicidal action not only to have the honor of dying for their Emperor, but so that nothing will remain for the Americans to salvage.

DURING SNEAK JAP ATTACKS, THESE DRAINAGE DITCHES ARE OFTEN USED AS SLIT TRENCHES



The pursuit groups not only fly cover for the transports en route to China, fly routine patrols, and fight off attacking Jap Zeros; they undertake bombing missions as well, P-40's becoming B-40's. The flying sharks "skip bomb" 20 to 70 feet above the ground, dropping 1,000-pound bombs which are set to explode at ten seconds.

The purpose of one recent B-40 mission was to cut the railroad line from

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Katha to Myitkyina to prevent the Japs from supplying their bases farther north, and to blast supply depots at Myitkyina. A railroad bridge at Loilaw was the specific target and six B-40's set out in three formations of two ships each. Motor trouble caused two planes to turn back. The first two planes failed to score a hit. The third chalked up a near miss that undermined the track. Lieut. W. E. Bertram, in the fourth plane, circled till dust and smoke cleared, then dived and released his 1,000-pounder. As the lieutenant explained, "When you drop one from as low as 1,500 feet, you pull back hard on the stick and get the hell away from the explosion."

He was too busy to observe results, but pilots in other planes who saw the bomb strike radioed to him that it was a direct hit. On other missions over the Jap-held railroad the boys had strafed water towers, riddling them with .50-caliber bullets, had even machine-gunned locomotives, one of which was seen to steam up and obviously had been put out of commission.

At one of the small outposts in upper Assam where the group was lonelier, if possible, than at other bases adjacent to Chabua, a sergeant, with a weakness for the foul-tasting native brew which is spurned by even the thirstiest soldier, secretly prevailed upon his bearer to furnish him with a regular supply. His periodic sessions with the bottle on several occasions had caused him to be "busted" to a private. He would reform for a time and re-earn his stripes, only to fall again from grace and to privatcy. One day the Japs attempted a sneak attack on the installations at his post, a day when our sergeant was again celebrating the recovery of his three stripes. The alert sounded and everyone scurried for the slit trenches. The Zeros came in low, one after another strafing the area from tree-top level. One brave man, none too steady of foot, and spurning the security of the trench, faced the oncoming Nip planes with machine-gun to shoulder. Language as foul as his breath poured from his mouth with the same velocity as the bullets from his gun, one of which found its mark and a Zero crashed to earth.

If there is a point to this true incident, perhaps it is to prove again that heroes are made, not born, and sometimes are made by a faithful bearer, who, doubtless, should be wearing the decoration now adorning the sergeant's blouse.

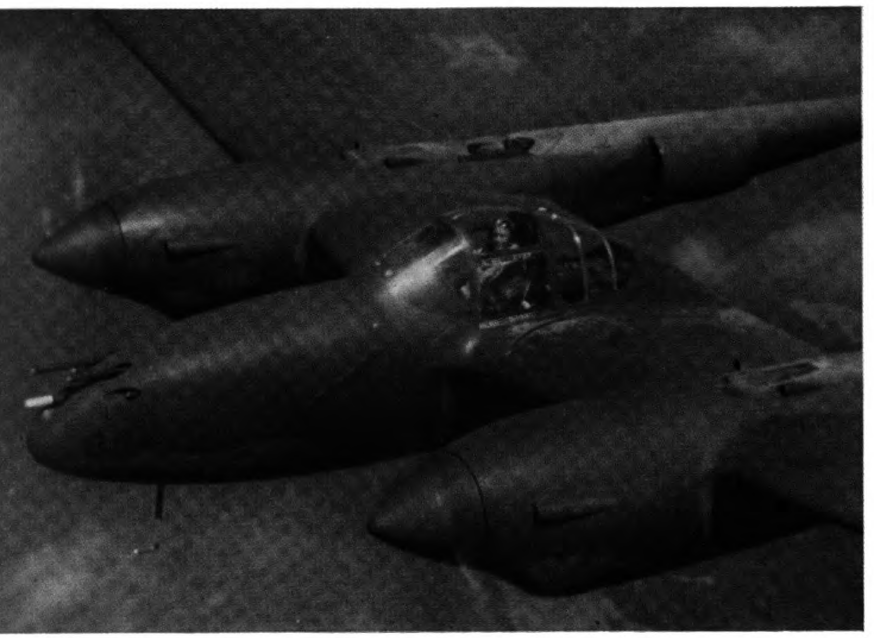
Airmen in the China-Burma-India theater carry booklets or cards containing useful phrases in two or more native languages. If you wanted to say in Burmese: "I am fighting for your people," you would try to enunciate the following: *"Kin bya lu myo a twet sit taik nay der."* Or you might try this on a member of a North Burma tribe: "I am very glad you are helping us and we will not forget you." *Ya jingpawni ante peh kurroom aiy majaw graiy kaboo aiy reh hpangde raiytimung in malap ne reh."* To wrap one's vocal chords around such seeming gibberish is quite an accomplishment, yet the American soldier manages to make himself understood. I was presented with an English-Burmese booklet by one of the boys with whom I had flown from Miami to Natal two months previously. He and the other technicians who had been so mystified about Project X and the whereabouts of Chabua, had been in the area a month now and some had already been assigned to flight crews which were regularly flying the Hump.

While some ATC crew members had made successful parachute landings after unfortunate encounters with Japanese Zeros, and had found their way back to base with the help of natives, many crews as well as individual flyers have never

COL. JOHN BARR AT ASSAM WAS FIRST TO CARRY 1,000-POUND BOMB ON FIGHTER PLANE



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been heard from after a last heartbreaking radio signal of distress. Sometimes there was not even a signal — the plane just didn't return.

To increase the chances of the men's survival after a crash or parachute landing in the jungles, the Rescue Squadron of ATC's India-China Wing was organized in March, 1943. The squadron spent four months in study of the natives, collecting and distributing the gifts most likely to influence them favorably, and in parachuting samples to prepare them for what they could expect for their cooperation. Soon they became familiar with the friendly white star of the Air Forces, and their assistance has been invaluable to the men awaiting rescue.

The squadron's planes drop signal panels, maps, food, medical supplies, books, gifts for the natives, even cribbage boards and other games with which disabled men may occupy themselves until rescue parties can get to them. Doctors and men specifically trained in prerequisites of the jungle have parachuted to assist in the rescues. Unfortunately, the Japs seem to be very fond of gunning for the rescue ships and sometimes have been successful in downing them. Men of the rescue squadron are on constant duty in the Intelligence Office of Wing Headquarters estimating positions and recording information, upon the accuracy of which may depend the lives of the lost men.

Sometimes, when a plane has trouble, the pilot can radio his position before crash landing or bailing out, but much of the rescue work is started without knowledge of this position. Clues may come by "grapevine telegraph," from other pilots who, in the course of their trips over the Hump, see something unusual — perhaps a parachute — in the forests below. Whatever the lead, even without it, a rescue plane immediately takes off, to skim the tops of the trees and hedge-hop the hills and valleys in search of the victims. The sighting of one white object by a plane on a

UNARMED TRANSPORTS RARELY HAVE FIGHTER TOP COVER;



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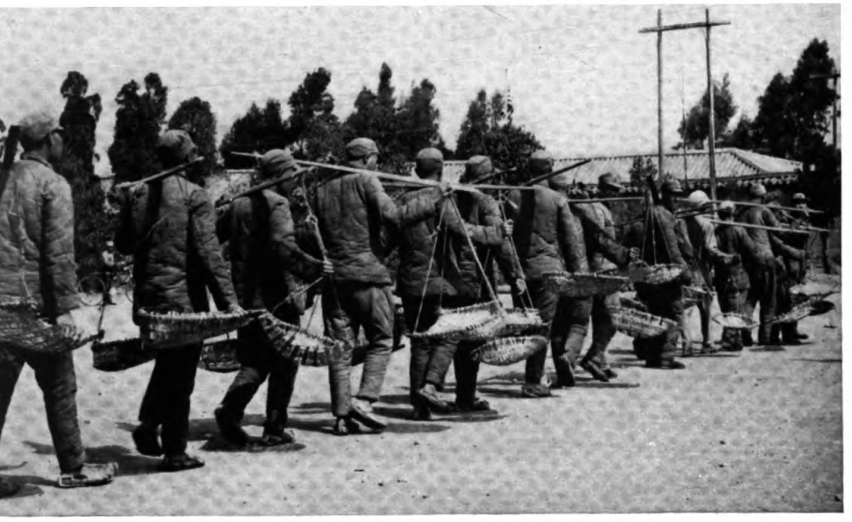
routine flight resulted in locating and rescuing a crew which had not been heard from in three days and was presumed lost. In another instance, the enemy shot down an unarmed transport flying at 17,000 feet, killing both pilots. Miraculously, the radio man and the crew chief survived the crash, but one of them suffered a broken back. Headquarters ascertained that the injured lad would die unless a doctor attended to him at once. Flight Surgeon Captain Spruell volunteered to parachute to the rescue. He landed safely, treated the injury, and eventually got the boy out of the jungle to a hospital, where he recovered.

ATC's India-China route leads through the narrow corridor of Assam across the Himalayas to Kunming, the last stop. This route, known as "the Burma Road of the air," is the only occidental entrance left to that unfortunate country, and China's only outlet to her allies. Our base at Kunming has been built with the aid of thousands of coolies. Here, as at Assam, the freight

WHEN ATTACKED BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT, THEY TAKE TO THE CLOUDS. IN CLEAR WEATHER THEY RESORT TO HEDGE-HOPPING IN ATTEMPT TO SHAKE ZEROS



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CHINESE LABOR BATTALION REPORTS FOR WORK AT AMERICAN ATC BASE NEAR KUNMING



ENTRANCE GATE TO KUNMING. *(BELOW)* NO CLOTHESPINS NEEDED AT THIS ARMY LAUNDRY



depots were filled with supplies, each pound of which had been flown in by ATC's Burma Roadsters, and was awaiting dispersal by truck, rail, and plane to China's needy hordes.

For a long time after the bases in Assam were established, war personnel and matériel were so urgently needed that not an inch of space in train or plane could be spared for anything else. The men stationed there were therefore without even the few luxuries obtainable at most other outposts. The Red Cross and USO were unknown. There were no PX's where candy, soft drinks, or beer could be purchased. General Alexander had a museum piece on the mantel of his quarters — the only bottle of Coca-Cola in Assam! Of course, now and then, a sympathetic transient pilot would cram his pockets with chocolate bars or a bottle or two of something refreshing for a friend, but these driblets filled little of the need all fighting men have for small comforts.

India is a long way from home and loneliness always has been a difficult problem to combat, no matter how strenuous are the efforts to keep men contented and amused. Sammie was no exception, and his face was a little melancholy as he helped me to pack my bags. But my schedule demanded that I be off.

We talked until late on my last night in Assam, and after three hours' sleep I was off at eight o'clock the following morning. The monsoons had momentarily withdrawn to the mountains and the valley was serene and sunny.

Among my fellow plane passengers were three airmen, victims of pilot fatigue, who were returning to the states for recuperation. Eager as we were to leave this remote and primi-

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CONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN AIR BASE IN CHINA. HEAVY ROLLER PULLED BY COOLIE LABORERS PACKS AIRSTRIP. *(BELOW)* DAILY MENU OF RICE

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STANDING IN WELCOME SHADE OF TRANSPORT'S WING, NATIVES WATCH UNLOADING OF NEWLY ARRIVED CARGO. JEEP WAITS TO RUSH MAIL TO BASE P.O.

tive land, all of us were a little reluctant. The day was so delightful — the rich and verdant jungle; the wet, blue rice paddies; and the green variegated patterns of the tea gardens — all offering their very loveliest countenances for our admiration.

The pilot, in like mood, flew but a few hundred feet above the valley and we had a last view of slow-moving ox-carts, of white herons and other tropical birds over the swamps, of water buffaloes knee-deep in the paddies, and of natives trudging behind their crude plows along the banks of the limpid Brahmaputra, which reflected the frosted peaks of the Himalayas.

MAJ. GEN. C. R. SMITH, DEPUTY COMMANDER ATC, TROUBLE SHOOTING AT UPPER ASSAM



About 1,150 miles later we landed at Agra, where we were held over for a day awaiting the abatement of storms in western India. Next day we boarded a C-47 for Jodhpur. The country below us was inundated for miles at a stretch, and the railroad tracks were washed out in many places. Our plane made the usual approach to the field and lowered its landing gear and flaps. We waited for the gentle touch of the wheels on the runway. Instead, the transport struck the earth with a jolt, nosed, and rocked back and forth vio-

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AIR COMMODORE, HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJAH SIR UMAID SINGHJI BAHADUR, MAHARAJAH OF JODHPUR, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., A.D.C., L.L.D.

lently. Boxes of freight tore loose from their lashing. Baggage and men jumbled together. Smoke issued from the left wing. I was first to the door and jerked at the handle, which broke off in my hands. Lieut. Tom Hubbard (Bronxville, N. Y.), anticipating fire, leaped over me and pulled the emergency release. The door dropped open and we all emerged, to find both props torn off. One of them had hit against the fuselage behind the pilot. Fire extinguishers were put into play, forestalling further disaster. In landing, the left wheel of the plane had plowed deep into the rain-soaked earth, spooning it up like brown sugar. Beyond minor scratches and the bad scare, our arrival at Jodhpur was without other mishap.

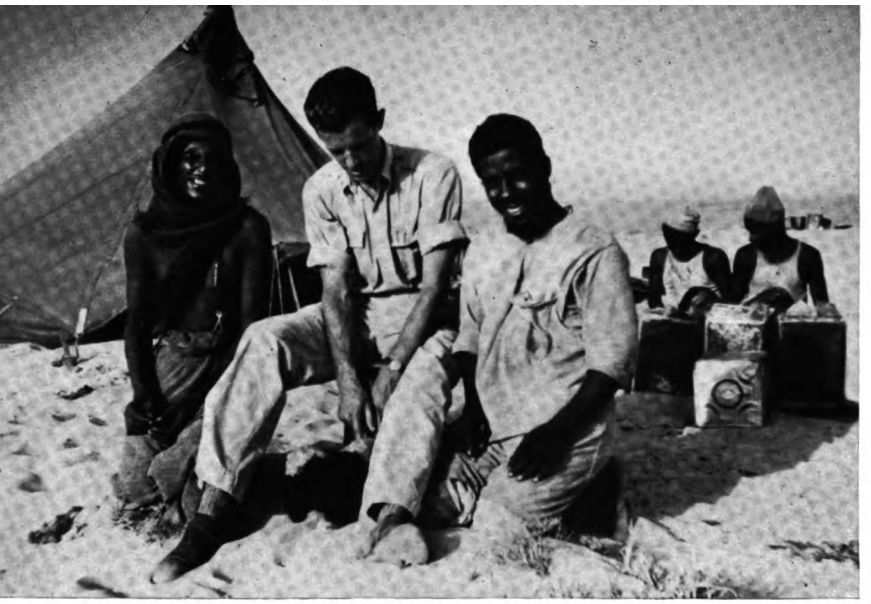
While awaiting another plane, Capt. Walter Keefer and Lieuts. Ronald Fruda, Jerry Cleveland, and Tom Hubbard, and I visited the Maharajah of Jodhpur. His magnificent palace of Jodhpur marble, costing the equivalent of $4,000,000, was large enough to accommodate 450 British troops. Unusual rains had destroyed their barracks and he had invited the men to the palace while new installations were being erected. A pilot himself, he enjoyed exchanging flying experiences with us.

That night we left for Karachi; thence Aden;

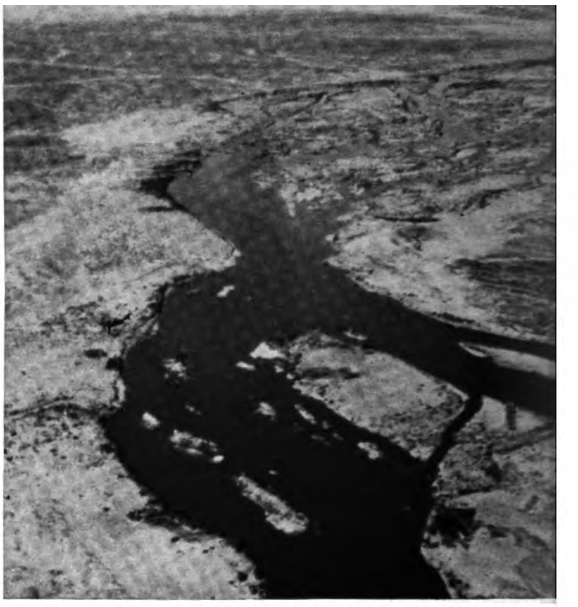
LIEUT. TOM HUBBARD *(RIGHT)* AND DMITRI AFTER MISHAP AT JODHPUR



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NATIVE WORKERS LIVE IN TENTS PITCHED NEAR BASE AT LONELY DESERT POST IN ARABIA



HERE FLOWING THROUGH ARID NUBIAN DESERT, THE NILE

Asmara in Eritrea, foregoing the House of Mirrors but unable to resist the delicious ice cream; Khartoum; then northwards over the blue Nile which winds through the golden sands of the Nubian Desert. Below us slept the once powerful Pharohs inside their magnificent Temple of Karnak. Were they, I wondered, stirring restlessly within their windings, disturbed by the strange goings on in the modern war-torn world?

During the tense days when Rommel was at the gates of Egypt, ATC had flown tons of supplies from Khartoum to Cairo, as well as additional tons for Russia. When the outlook was particularly black for the Allies in North Africa, the British defense almost broke down for lack of antitank gun shell fuses. Thousands of pounds were urgently needed. Without them the British would be unable to hold back the enemy for more than a few days. Nearest supplies were in the United States. Both ATC and the RAF diverted a number of planes for the emergency, and the overseas transports flew through exceptionally bad weather, delivering the munitions to Cairo in the unbelievable time of three days and helping to turn the tide of the campaign. With Rommel on the run across North Africa the American IXth Bomber Command moved westward to Bengasi. To expedite the Fox's departure, ATC supplied the great force of bombing planes with a continuous stream of critical

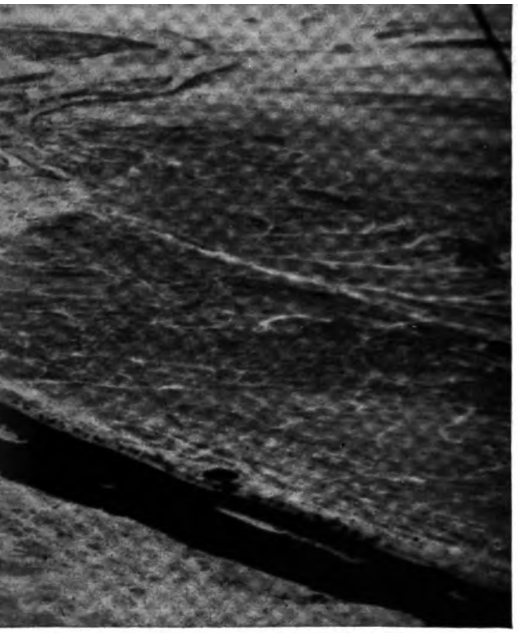
TOURISTS ON CAMELS — AN OLD STORY TO SPHINX WHO EYES THE JEEP CURIOUSLY



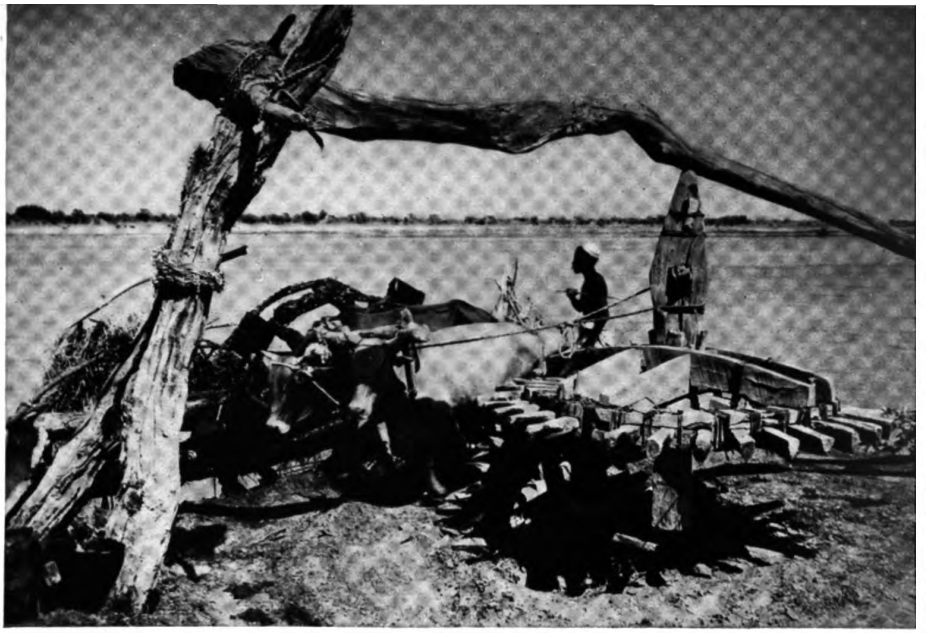
FLIGHT CREW MEMBERS REST ON VERANDA OF THE ATC



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IRRIGATES CAIRO'S DELTA COUNTRY FAR TO THE NORTH



PRESENT METHODS OF IRRIGATION ON NILE'S BANKS ARE IDENTICAL TO BIBLICAL TIMES

items. My itinerary called for a visit to the IXth at Bengasi, where I anticipated seeing that delivery system in operation.

At Cairo, the newsboys were shouting: "Musso mafeesh!"—no more Mussolini. This indeed was good news! Everybody was elated.

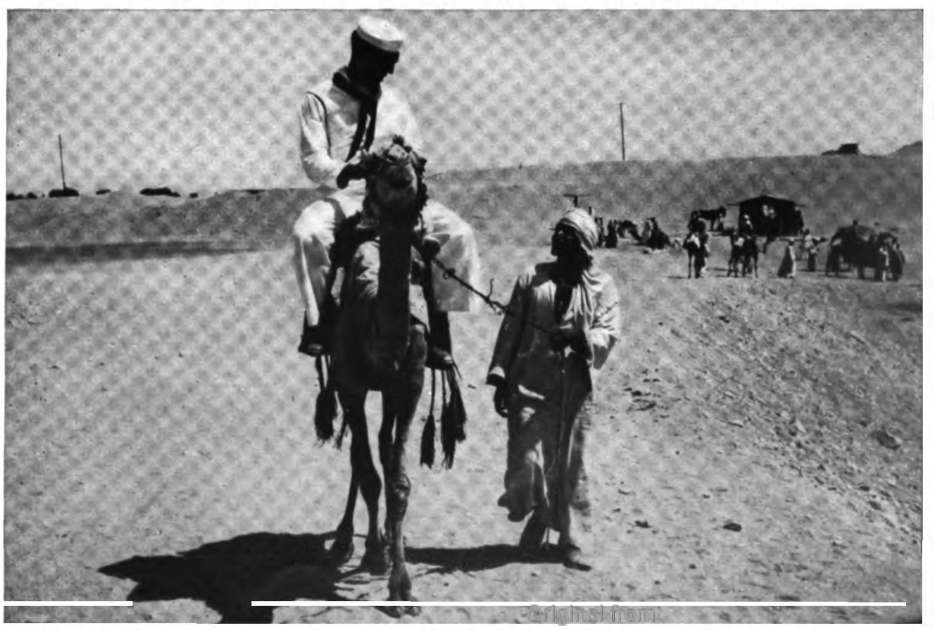
The war had made a boom town of Cairo. Taxicab rates were higher than back in the states. Streets were jammed with soldiers and sailors from all the Allied countries. With pockets full of back pay which had mounted up while they fought in the North African and Middle East theaters, the servicemen crowded into night clubs, restaurants, and bazaars. Greek, Turkish, and Syrian shop and restaurant owners were growing fat with profits. The enormous veranda at Shepheard's Hotel was the popular afternoon meeting place for diplomats, officers, and war correspondents. At the many tables sat smartly dressed women escorted by red-fezzed, prosperous Egyptians or by pink-cheeked British officers, precise, immaculate, and poised. Heated discussions on the war were carried on in all tongues. The war itself had departed, but the post-mortems raged hotter than ever. Champagne and brandy were plentiful as were most wines.

In contrast was the General Hospital at Kilo 13, every bed occupied with wounded men from the North African and Sicilian campaigns. Most of them were the unfortunate paratroopers

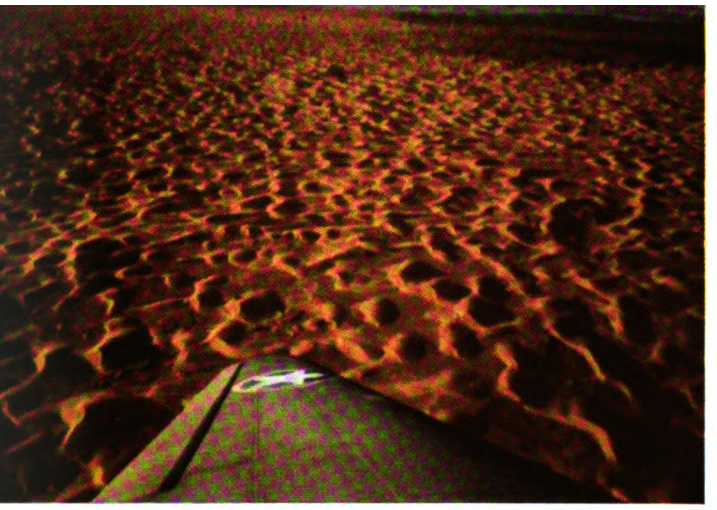
HOUSE IN HELIOPOLIS, MODERN SUBURB OF OLD CAIRO



SEA LEGS ASTRIDE SHIP OF THE DESERT. A FURLOUGH "MUST" FOR SERVICEMEN IN EGYPT



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DUNES OF NORTH LIBYAN DESERT SEEN FROM AN ALTITUDE OF 4,500 FEET



SCORPIONS PROWL IN TENTS AND CLOTHING; ATTACK WHEN DISTURBED

whose planes over Sicily had been mistaken for those of the enemy. Brig. Gen G. X. Cheves, CG of the Service of Supply, Middle East Theater, escorted me through the wards. The men were greatly cheered by Il Duce's downfall.

Bengasi, Libya

It was bloody and historic country over which we flew on the route to Bengasi. There were Matruh and El Sollum, both within the boundaries of Egypt. We entered North Libya and soared past the battered town of Tobruk, now little more than a large pile of rubble. Not far beyond lay Bengasi.

We heard a familiar click of steel. The giant rubber-tired tricycle which is the landing gear swung out below the belly of our C-87 Army Transport plane and locked firmly into place.

Blue wastes of water beneath us were rimmed by a tiny margin of whitecaps where the Mediterranean laps against a bright yellow beach. A green strip, 10 miles wide, along the shore line, then tawny wastes of sand stretched endlessly southward. A few white patches, glittering in desert sunlight, grew to the outlines of a city. We circled the Bengasi airport and, engines softly throttling down, came in with all the ease of an airliner landing at La Guardia Field.

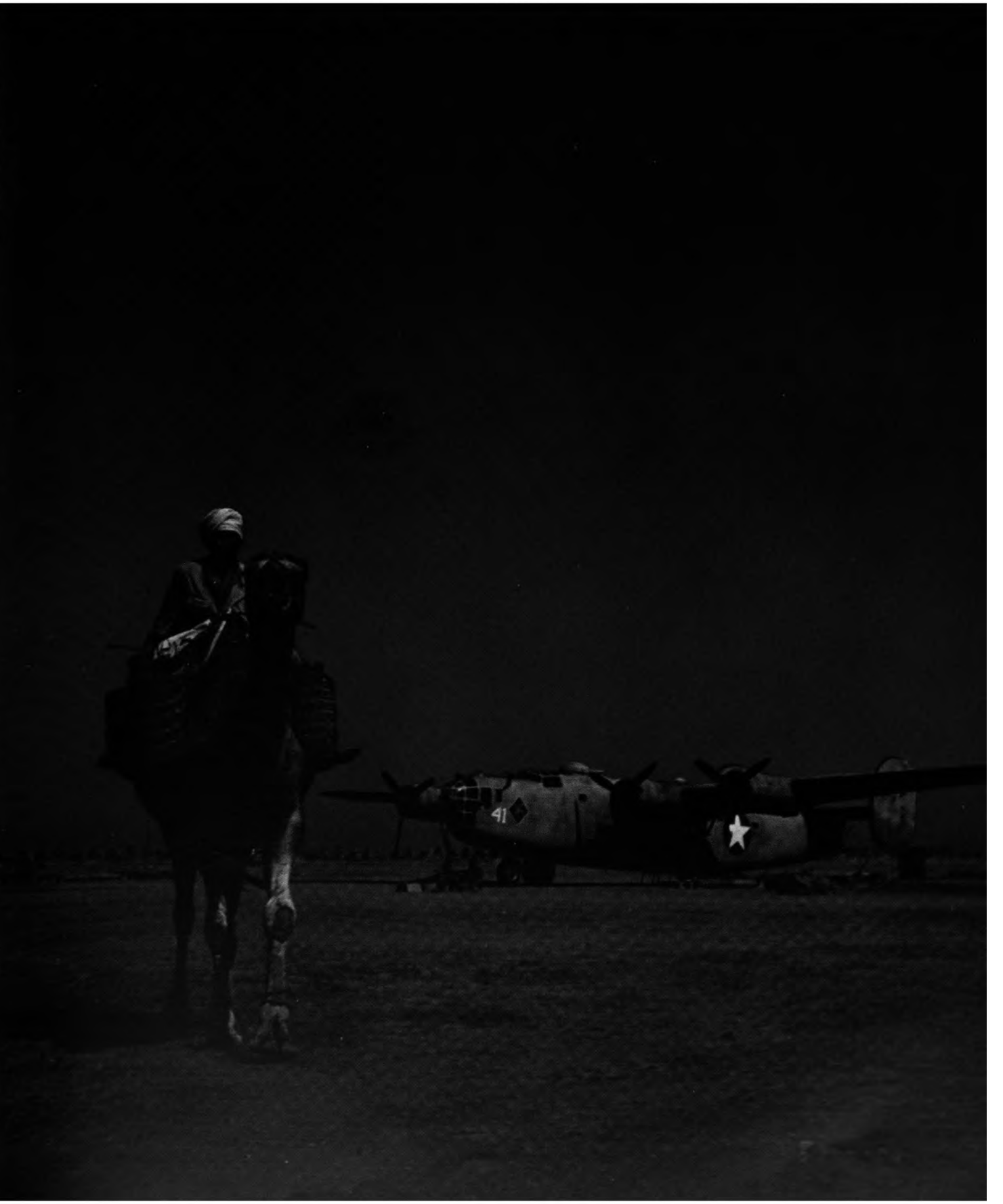
Quite differently had the big Libs, Douglases, and other planes of the ATC set down their passengers and cargo a few months before. The runways then had been gouged with bombholes and the pilots of these unarmed sky trucks, scorching to avoid attack, found no perfect strip of concrete to accommodate their 20-ton ships. A prayer—or a curse accomplished the trick in those days.

Rommel was gone now, gone for the last time and Bengasi was having a necessary breather. The British had taken the town from Rommel on Christmas Day, 1941; a month later the enemy recaptured it and held it until November, 1942, when Montgomery again ejected them, this time, permanently.

Driving in a jeep on our way to the IXth

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SENUSSI ARABS, BY NOW CALLOUSED TO WAR'S TRAGEDY, PLOD STOICALLY TO THEIR DAILY CHORES. *(BELOW)* BENGASI, LIBYA—BOMBED AND DESERTED



Bomber Command headquarters was like driving through a movie set—buildings with one wall standing or entire fronts gone, open rooms staring at us in surprise, dirt and rubbish everywhere. It was too overdone to be authentic.

Natives, trudging along with their camels, did not share our interest in these things—they were returning home. Bengasi, to us a weather-beaten wasps' nest fast falling to pieces, was sweet to them, as is any home, however wrecked. A steady stream of Libyans shuffled endlessly toward the town. The camels looking bored, as camels always do, had their backs piled high with household belongings. Bright shawls and rugs, baskets, jugs, stew pans, kids, everything owned by these Okies of the African dust bowl were being borne aloft by these compliant beasts.

We passed a group of Senussi. At least the youth of North Africa could muster a grin for a stranger—little girls delicately featured and with skin like ripe olives, flashed gleaming, happy smiles at us and waved gaily. Tatoo marks ornamented their faces, the Arab version of cosmetics without which no young girl of that region could consider herself

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even presentable, not to mention attractive.

Again, more wreckage. Twisted guns, smashed tanks, crazy-angled broken-off plane wings, tails or noses told us we had arrived at the junkyard of North Africa. Every old battlefield in this war is a heap of junk, a place where men and machines perished together. Now, only metal skeletons remained, red with rust, and the paint peeling—the whole resembling an excavated burial ground of winged pre-historic monsters.

Command Headquarters, a group of buildings near Bengasi, is one of war's wonders, it has served the same purpose for both sides so often that count is lost. The buildings, considering their vulnerability, are exceptionally well preserved. In one, the British found a book left by the Germans containing the names of visiting Axis dignitaries. Though departure had been hasty, the Germans had written on the flyleaf: "Keep this book in order. We'll be back."

The British not only kept the book, they used it as their own registry for visiting brass hats. A month later, when at Rommel's insistence they had to leave, the book remained. When the British again occupied Bengasi GHQ, there was the book, with added German signatures. Doubtless it will wind up in the British Museum, but what a find for an autograph fan!

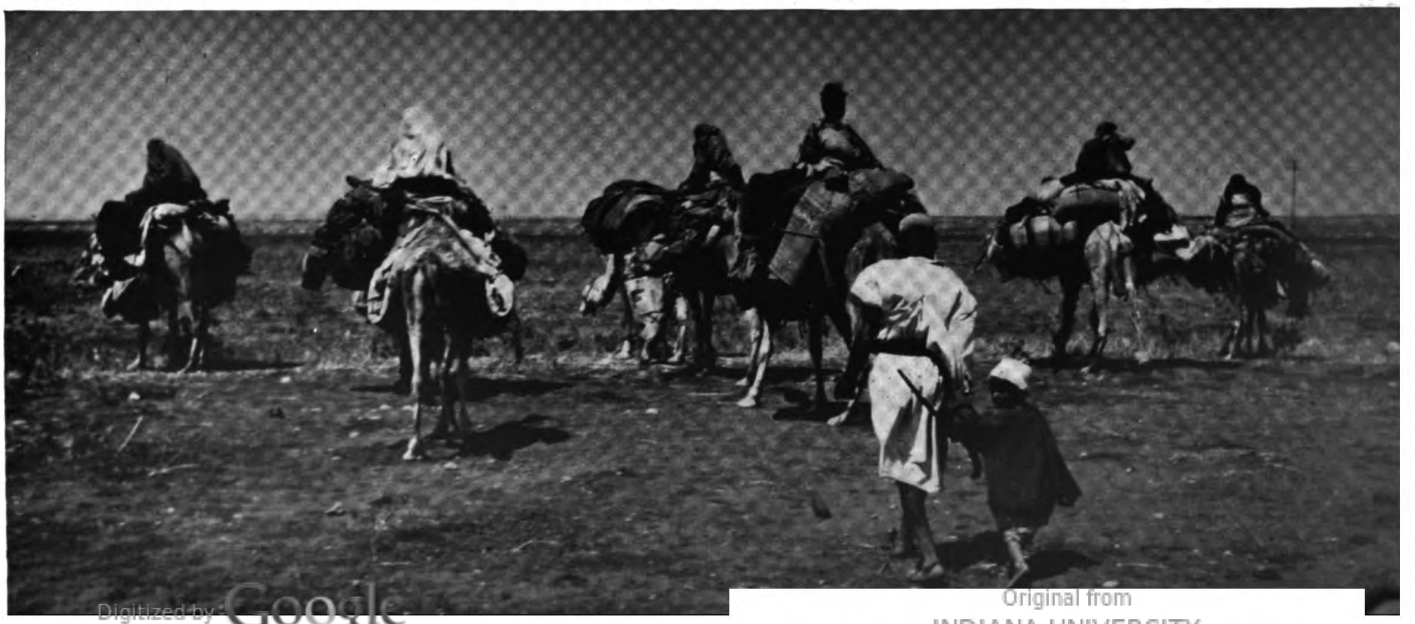
At Command Headquarters I discovered that here as everywhere else in the war areas the visitor on special assignment, like myself, is on his own. Attention, courtesy, and helpful infor-



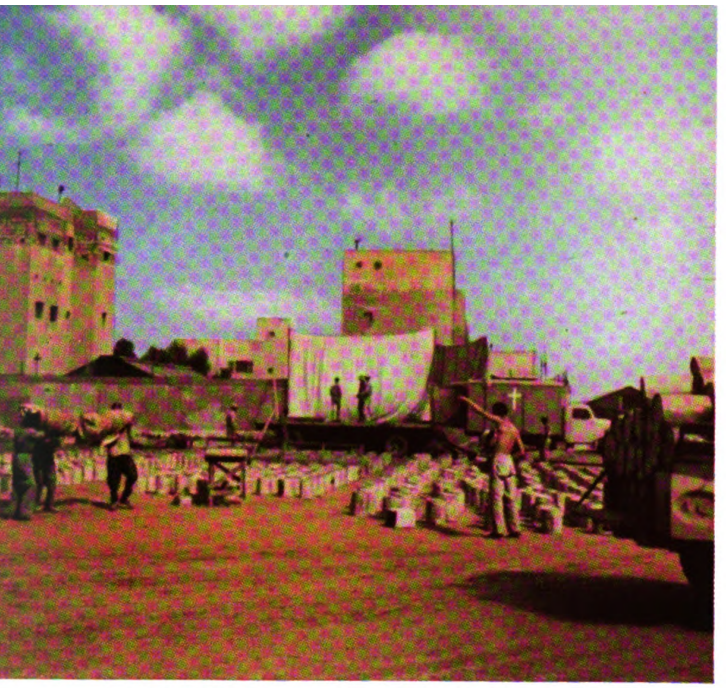
NATIVES REALIZED AMERICANS HAD DRIVEN WAR FROM THEIR COUNTRY



AFTER ARRIVAL OF THE AMERICAN FORCES, NATIVES RETURN TO THEIR BOMB-WRECKED HOMES. *(ABOVE)* CHILDREN OF LIBYA ARE GAILY-ORNAMENTED



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OPEN-AIR MOVIE OUTSIDE COMMAND HEADQUARTERS; SEATS ARE GAS CANS

mation you'll get, but you'll lug your own water and forage for your own water can.

The Adjutant General and A2 Intelligence cast the usual penetrating eye on credentials and then a supply officer produced a cot and two blankets and ordered a "90-pounder" for my occupancy. This was the tent which was to be my home for two weeks. It was eight by twelve feet and had been pitched not over 100 yards from the Mediterranean. It had no floor, and a cot was the only furniture. But weeks of living with the ATC had taught me how to use the things at hand. Two flash bulb cases made an excellent table. My helmet had been lost in the shuffle so I made a wash basin of an empty rusted tin can.

My one luxury item made up for many discomforts. Louise, my wife, had bought some candles at Abercrombie's on my last day in New York. I had lugged them 26,000 miles to China and back and many times had considered saving their weight. But now, in the desert, candles were priceless. They enabled me to climb into bed with less danger of stepping on an uninvited guest. The scorpions have a sting that lingers. They take up lodging in shoes, pants legs, beds, open duffle bags, and every other likely spot about a tent. They do their prowling at night, thus walking around bare-footed is practised by only the uninitiated.

As ATC was to pick me up in a fortnight, my stay could be no rest period. I tossed my luggage and most of my paraphernalia onto my cot and, camera in hand, hurried to join Colonel Keith Compton for my first inside glimpse of a bomber command at work.

"We've been here so long there isn't much we've missed," the Colonel said. And indeed the IXth Bomber Command's record is unparalleled in history of desert warfare. In June, 1942, the command took part in that raid on the Italian fleet which virtually disposed of Italy as a sea power in this war. Our fliers had pounded Rommel's supply line. They had bombed the north coast of Africa from Tobruk and Bengasi westward to Tripoli, Sfax, Tunis, and Bizerte.

Axis convoys had made port on the bottom of the Mediterranean as a result of these sorties. Harbors in Sicily, the Italian mainland, Greece, Salonika, Crete—all this has been our happy hunting ground, the Colonel told me.

Yet in all this time the IXth had never been bombed or directly attacked. One February night, however, a Nazi bomber had followed a wounded Liberator home. As the big ship limped into its landing field, the Nazi swooped down and let it have everything.

"Colonel Nero says that Lib had more holes than Carter has pills," Colonel Compton laughed.

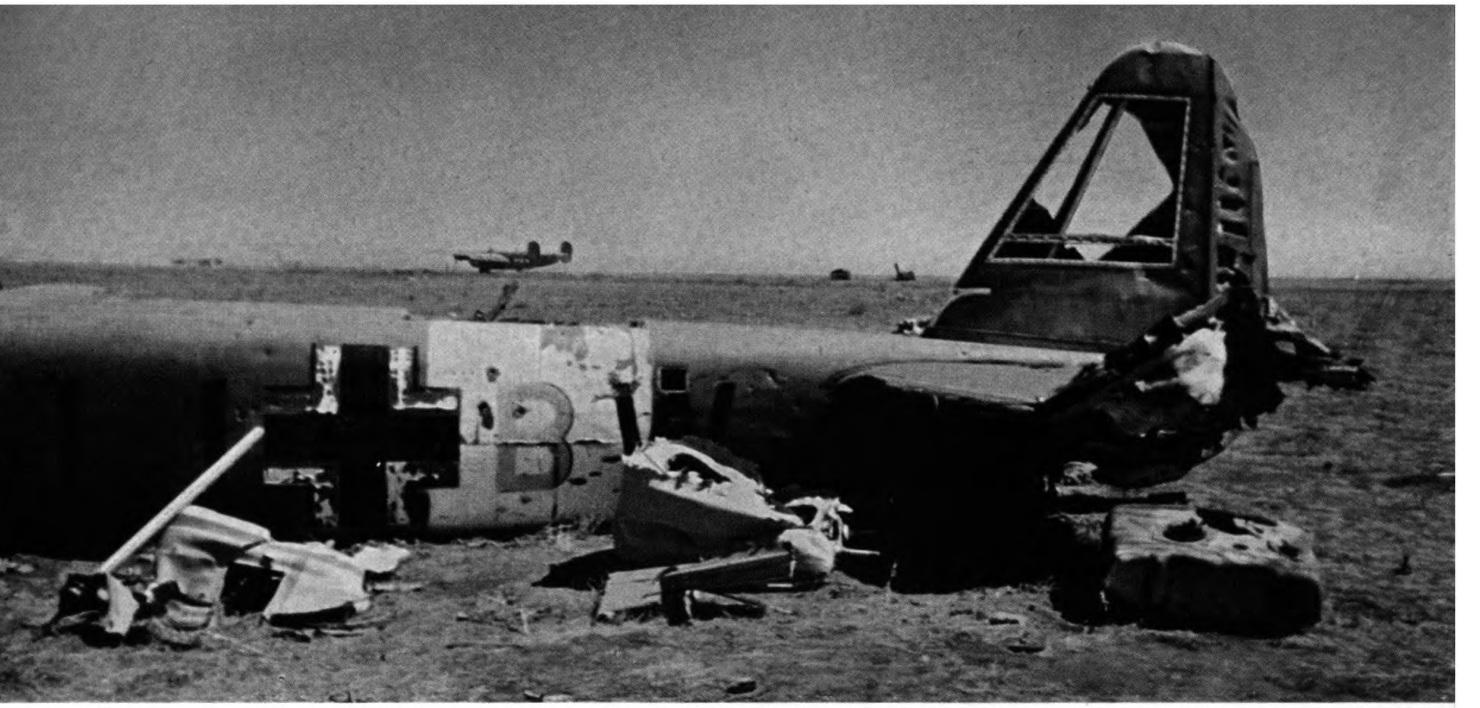
"Nero should know, he has to put them together again."

Upon Lt. Col. Ulysses S. Nero's shoulders

ONE OF MANY AXIS PLANE GRAVEYARDS SCATTERED OVER THE DESERT



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Rommel's Rubbish. All that's left of a Nazi plane rots in the desert while in the background a B-24 starts on a new mission.

The Other Fight. In the desert these Liberator crew members must fight not only the Germans but daily afternoon dust storms.



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Bull Session at the improvised barber shop, desert style. A favorite spot when off duty. *(below)* There's always a hot draft in these happy homes in Libya.



rested the responsibility of salvaging those parts of battle-damaged Liberators that could be put to work again. One of the legendary figures of the Air Forces, he had recently been given the award of the Legion of Merit, in recognition of his accomplishments. Colonel Compton promised I should meet him at officers' mess that night.

Meanwhile my shutter finger was beginning to itch. I strolled through the GI tent area, asked questions, and made new acquaintances. These men, inured to danger, devote their off-duty hours to the essential trifles rather than to large thoughts about the war and the future of civilization. Likely, when he sits down to sew on a button, the GI reviews his last mission — its faults and its successes. Perhaps he had seen a bomber turn back because of a loose cap on a gas tank. Or he may have observed a new technique in enemy fighter attack. The next mission has to be better — and it will.

When he's in the mood for a bull session, he repairs to the barber tent, not unlike Hank's Tonsorial Parlor on Elm Street. What is there about the gentle scraping of a razor or the click of barber shears that gives men a sense of well-being and privacy? Unfortunately, some of the best stories told at these sessions are not the kind that get printed.

Soldiers are notorious for grousing, but it's never the big things that bring about complaint. First, last, and always, there is the sand. Sudden winds wrench out tent stakes, and expand canvas homes like the billowing sails of a ship. The boys return to their tents dog-tired to find sand over cots, blankets, and all of their personal belongings. Sometimes before turning in they shake off the darn stuff, but just as often, they fling themselves

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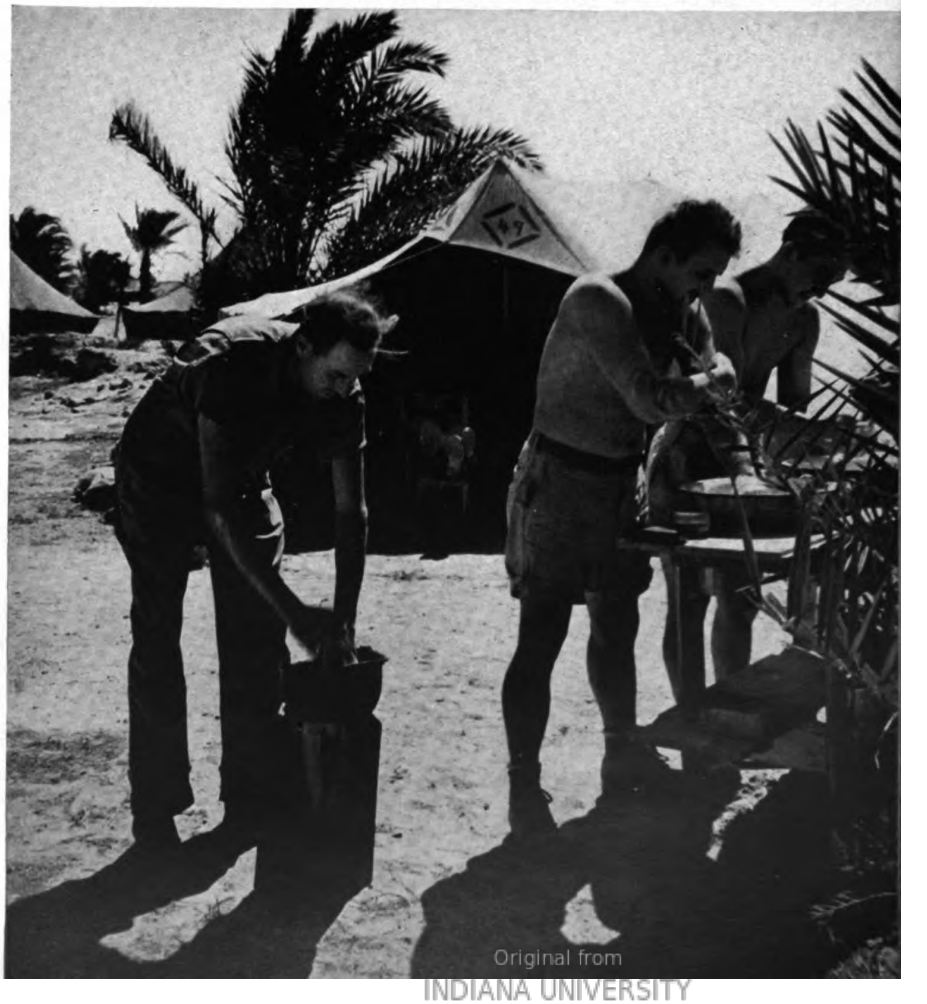
Wind Keeps Trying while B-24 pilot who lives here is off on a mission. *(below)* Crew members use convenient all-purpose helmet as wash basin before chow.

on their cots, gritty sand and all.

Of course, there are a few things to be done about it, such as fixing up a makeshift floor or buying a nice new matting at the PX. These don't really keep down their personal supply of sand but while they're about it, they feel better.

Drinking water is always a problem. Warm and heavily chlorinated, it is brought from Bengasi to the various units, some camped as far as 20 miles from the city. It is the greatest treat on the desert to see a bomber crew pile out of a plane bearing cans of icy water. Taken aloft to temperatures below zero, the water is chilled and then brought down to satisfy the thirsty ground crews.

For washing clothes, bathing and shaving, tepid water has to do. The helmet is the most convenient contraption ever invented for all these purposes. It is used sometimes even for cooking.



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← **Those Letters from Home,** a real floor in the tent, a bomb-fin casing for a table. What more could any American airman ask?

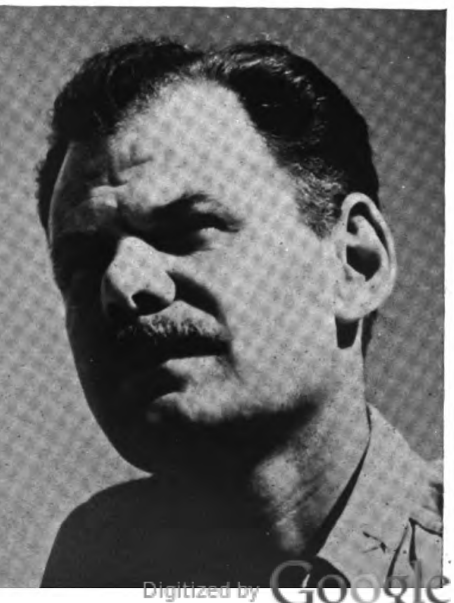
New Arrivals *(above)* prepare for a life of war, sand and scorpions while the veteran crew *(below)* engages in a little skull practice.



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To the GI, all through Africa and India, a native is a Wog. They told me in Bengasi that the Duke of Windsor, when Prince of Wales, had bestowed upon the natives of India the designation of Western Oriental Gentlemen, quickly shortened to Wog, and now part of the soldiers' language. Wog food-sellers bring into the camps delicious fresh grapes at 10 piastres a bunch. But I was warned about the Wogs' grapes — they must be sterilized in boiling water before eating, to check the dread typhus germ.

When I paid my courtesy call on Maj. Kenneth O. Dessert of California, CO of the Nth Squadron, his welcome was cordial and he invited me to his Officers' Club. The GI's, I learned, have no corner on ingenuity. Late afternoon dust was beginning to kick up as we opened the flap of a tent, outwardly like all the others. But inside, incongruously perched on the floor of desert sand, stood a little bar made of packing cases. Nearby was a table covered with green felt. Here, as at the ATC bases in India, empty 5 gallon gas cans served for chairs. At the other end of the tent, a second table was set up for card and crap games. Whoever said an army travels on its stomach failed to notice the ubiquitous ivory cubes and greasy decks of cards.

Sipping a rare Scotch, gift of visiting RAF pilots, I heard bursts of ack-ack and rushed outside the tent expecting a German raid. Gazing upwards I saw puffs of explosives high in the air and, instinctively, I looked about for a slit trench. Turning back to the tent to warn the others, I found the crap game still going on. They were amused by my excitement and explained that the Jerry was merely a reconnaisance plane, making the usual check-up of the number of our bombers recently returned from a raid.

As I sank onto my gas tank seat, I wondered whether my reactions were more of relief or disappointment over missing my first German raid.

Officers' mess at Command Headquarters, where I had been invited to dine with Brig. Gen. Uzal Girard Ent, the CG, was housed in one of a group of substantial white stone structures, surrounded by a low stone wall.

"It's surprising," I remarked to the officers as we strolled from their club tent to headquarters, "that these conspicuous white targets haven't been blown to bits before now."

They laughed. "When we were about to take Bengasi, we didn't want to destroy the only suitable place for headquarters," one explained. "Maybe the Jerries felt the same way about it."

The mess hall was furnished with three long tables made of sawhorses and planks which were covered with white cloths. Walls, painted a pastel blue, were bare of decoration. General Ent, soft-

Back from Ploesti. Three of the American officers who led the Ninth Bomber Command on the Ploesti raid. *(top)* Col. John R. (Killer) Kane, Group Commander. *(center)* Col. Edward J. Timberlake, Chief of Training Group. *(bottom)* Col. Leon W. Johnson, Group Commander.

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General Puffs. Soft-spoken Brig. Gen. U. G. Ent, Commanding General of Ninth Bomber Command. *(left)* Col. Jack Wood and *(right)* Col. Keith Compton, both group commanders. All three participated in historic raid of Rumanian oil refineries at Ploesti.

spoken, broad-shouldered, burly, with a quick, decisive handshake and a smile that lighted up his bronzed face, introduced me all around and motioned me to a seat.

Hamburgers, potatoes, bread, jam, pears and raspberry compote made our dinner. Our drink was a tepid lemonade, made with lemon powder, the universal beverage of the Air Forces in hot countries. As usual, there was no ice, and the lemon flavoring was added only to kill the taste of chlorine in the water.

The fare was similar to that of the enlisted men, I was to discover; if anything, the GI's had greater variety. One of the favorite pastimes with both officers and men was talk about cherry pie a la mode, chocolate malteds and 2-inch steaks. One concoction some officers enjoyed consisted of a batter of powdered egg, canned milk, corn meal and water, all mixed thoroughly. Spam was dipped into this and fried.

"Close your eyes when you chew it," one of them told me, "and dream of a lettuce and tomato sandwich, only be sure not to open them till the damn stuff's all gone."

Dinner over, General Ent rolled an unlighted cigar reflectively between his lips and cocked an eyebrow in the direction of Colonel Nero, dark-haired, quick-witted and favorite of the Command.

"Sam," said the General, "I need 150 Liberators day after tomorrow."

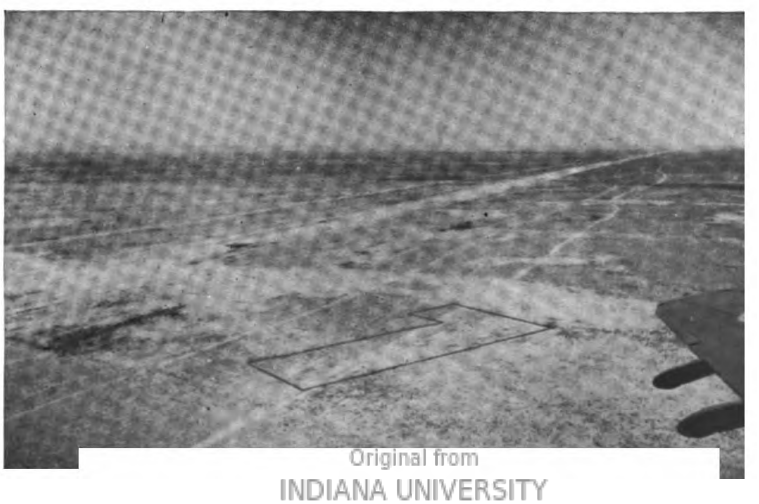
Nero's notebook slid out of his pocket and he flapped the pages over, scowling.

"I can deliver 120, General," he said hope-

On Reconnaissance. General Ent, piloting reconnaissance plane for Dmitri's photographic mission, checks instrument panel.



Practice Gridiron. Before Ploesti, the outlines of the target were traced at Bengasi. Here pilots spent several weeks at practice.



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Close Friendships develop at the isolated desert posts. Here, Col. Killer Kane *(center)* pals with crew members after mission.

Col. Keith Compton Twenty-eight-year-old group commander, second from right, watches bomb decorations destined for Messina.



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fully. Smiles lit up the faces of the other officers. I could tell it was a regular procedure.

"I said 150, Sam."

Nero shook his head contemplatively and drew a deep breath.

"General, I've inspected every ship back from Ploesti. If the ATC can get those engines here from the replacement center tomorrow morning, I might make it 136."

"Sam, I need 150."

"But, General, I won't turn over those ships without a test; you wouldn't want me to."

"You're right, Sam, 150 in perfect condition."

Nero shrugged his shoulders and waited. Colonel Compton volunteered the help of his flight crew. Colonels Killer Kane and Ed Timberlake, wing commander, thought they could do something about it too.

"You see how it is, Dmitri," the General laughed. "If Nero needed me to help put one of his damned ships together, I'd turn into a grease monkey myself and everybody in the Command feels the same way. The man has to work day and night."

"The General just means he won't take no for an answer," Nero explained. Then, turning to the CG: "Very well, sir, 150 Liberators on Wednesday."



Captured. An equipment item on Mussolini's books, Italian truck with four-wheel drive and steering, now works for us.



Compton's Liberandos was the name chosen by the boys of one group. They decorated all their Liberators with this legend.

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The General told me that the flying crews who help out in emergencies do it on a strictly volunteer basis. "The main thing is to get this dirty job finished. Remember when you're getting ready for a big game, it doesn't matter who happens to carry the water bucket.

"You may hear grousing about sand and food and the cursed weather we have around here, but you won't hear any whining about long hours or overtime or whose job it is to do what. We're all sweating out this damn thing together."

Ploesti was only a day removed from these officers now so casually gathered around the mess table. Tales of the great adventure were exchanged so rapidly that it was impossible to absorb more than a few. Neither the General nor his men knew yet that this mission would mark a turning point in the war; nor that the damage inflicted upon the Axis oil supplies in Rumania would so completely frustrate the enemy.

The Liberator was designed for high-altitude bombing, but the Ploesti mission was flown at such low altitudes that many of the planes, among them Killer Kane's "Hail Columbia," scraped up cornstalks into their bomb bays.

The CG had no illusions about the grimness of the Ploesti raid when he assigned himself to the lead plane of the first group. He knew that

Chow Line forms beyond bulletin board, on which are posted regulations as well as the score and success of the latest mission.

Banquet Tables Al Fresco. Those cans contain peanut butter, jams, pickles. Grape sellers in background hope to provide dessert.



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a good many men and planes would not get back. Colonels Kane, Wood, Johnson and Compton were in command of flight groups. Also there had been Col. Addison E. Baker. Baker had not returned. Leading a V formation, whose pilots he had instructed to follow him over the target, Baker's plane burst into flames just as he approached the smokestacks of Ploesti.

"He had to make a decision in a split second," Colonel Compton explained. "He could have tried to gain altitude to save himself and crew, but in so doing he would have endangered other planes in his formation. The alternative was to keep on straight over the target."

This he did. His bomb bay doors opened, the eggs dropped out, true to their mark. Then Baker's plane went somersaulting, over and over, a flaming torch. He had led his formation over the target, as he had said he'd do, and his decision meant death for himself and crew, but also it meant the attainment of his mission.

"A man has to be a kind of cold fish for this work, I guess," remarked the CG. "You're scared at the take-off, of course, I know I was, plenty. But when you get down to a 50-foot altitude and can see the enemy, all that vanishes.

"You know, everybody wants to be a gunner after a mission. A gunner releases most of his pent-up emotion when he lets the enemy have it."

"What about beforehand, General?" I asked. "Aren't some of the men inclined to beg off?"

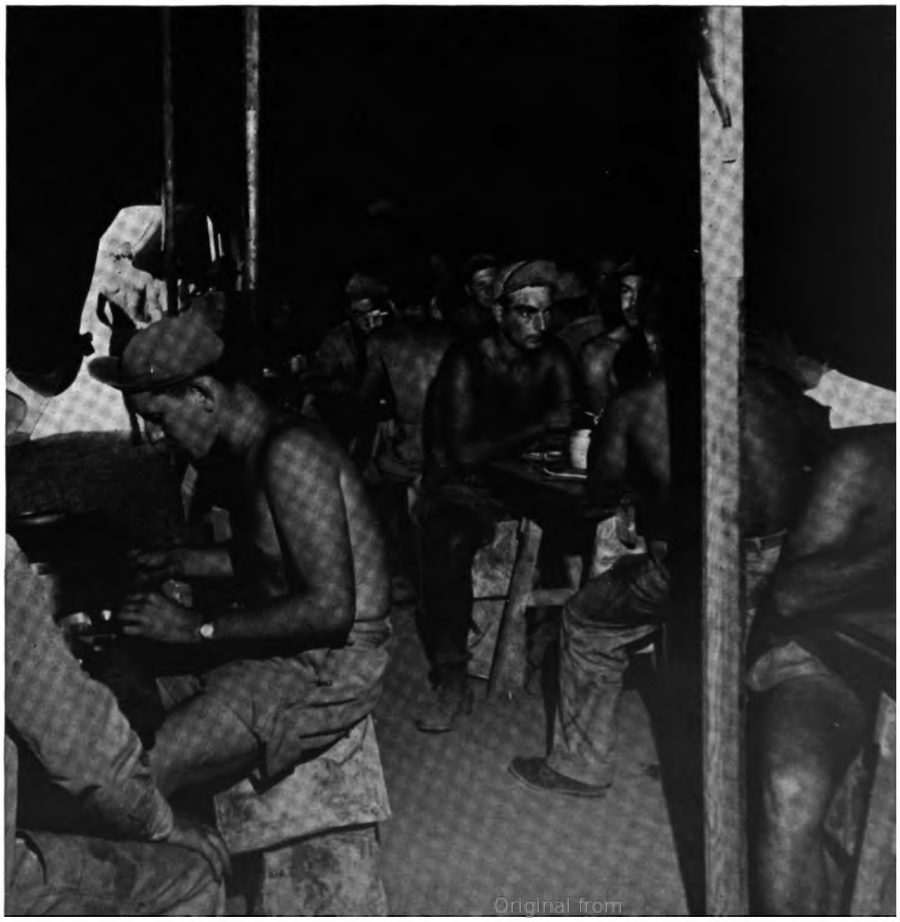
"On the contrary," replied the CG in his slow Pennsylvania drawl, "the day before Ploesti, several flight crew members were in the hospital for one slight complaint or another. But they talked their way out and were on hand for briefing and the mission."



He continued, "We'll be out on another mission just as soon as we finish licking our wounds."

General Ent, expert at coordinating the work of all groups under him, was insistent that his boys be credited not only with the raw courage which was to win the admira-

Junket In a Jeep. *(top)* Colonel Nero takes Dmitri for tour of well dispersed desert bases. *(below)* Not Waldorf-Astoria cuisine, but shirts can be shed at mess.



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SAND IN THE SPINACH. LUNCH IS NO PICNIC IN THE DESERT, BUT IT GIVES GROUND CREWS THEIR ONLY TIME TO STRETCH OUT AND RELAX

tion of the world after the Ploesti exploit, but with skill and forethought as well.

"I know you're interested in seeing our work and how Colonel Nero keeps our Liberators flying," Ent said. "Sam, why don't you take Dmitri around tomorrow and show him how you get it done?"

In this manner, I was given permission to probe behind the scenes and photograph some of the damage the enemy had done to our Liberator fleet on the famous Ploesti raid. This was to result in firsthand tales of the raids from the crew members themselves. For over a year, censorship was to keep its clamps down on much of this information.

The next day the General, piloting the plane, took me on an observation flight over the practice ground which had been laid out in preparation for the Ploesti raid. He pointed to the full scale outlines of the practice target down on the desert, not far from the beaten track of Rommel's retreating forces.

"It was laid out," the CG explained, "according to charts and data gathered from non-military sources, such as travel books and records of insurance companies." From motion pictures of small-scale models made in England, the crews had gained an excellent impression of how the terrain and salient land marks would appear.

Then came 10 days of constant practice in flying low over the imitation target, so low, in fact, that two planes scraped the ground and a camel was struck and killed.

"Though our Ploesti losses were heavy," the General told me, "the weeks of careful preparation meant all the difference to those crews that did have a chance to get back."

As I drove day after day with Colonel Nero from one group to another, I heard many stories of bravery over Ploesti. That concerning the bomber, "Lucky," was one with a happy ending.

The "Lucky's" insigne was a teddy bear with a bomb, and, for good measure I guess, a pretty girl. The ship belonged to Colonel Compton's group and in large letters it bore the word "Liberandos," which was selected in a contest

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CLEANING MESS KITS. ALL MESS KITS AND COOKING UTENSILS MUST BE WASHED AND RINSED IN BOILING WATER TO KEEP TROPICAL GERMS AT BAY

the Colonel held among the boys.

Some of the boys indulge in odd and various rituals just before take-off on a mission. Staff Sergeant Bill Dawley, tail gunner of the "Lucky," said he had a habit of going into the bomb bay right after take-off. There he would lick his right thumb and touch the bombs first to be released. The gesture, done very fast, is like the one kids use when they see a white horse. Other boys scrawl names or messages on bombs before they are loaded in the bomb bay. Both rituals are guaranteed to bring good luck.

All the way to Rumania, the "Lucky's" flight was like a Sunday morning pleasure trip; beneath, the trim towns appeared not unlike towns back home, and until the target area was reached there was no enemy fire.

Then, suddenly, flak exploding on both sides of the ship and the gunners going into action, each using his own judgment at what to shoot. Dawley, at the tail, told me he seldom even saw the target but fired away as fast as he could at everything he did see.

A big gas tank exploded directly in front of the plane, and Pilot Hap Kendall banked hard to the left to get out of the way. They were flying so low that the right wing barely missed the smokestack of the building they were supposed to bomb. As they were the last over the target, they dropped their bombs into the oil storage tanks. Hardly were bombs away when an enemy battery, some 400 yards off, let go with heavy fire hitting the nose, the bomb bay, and the tail assembly.

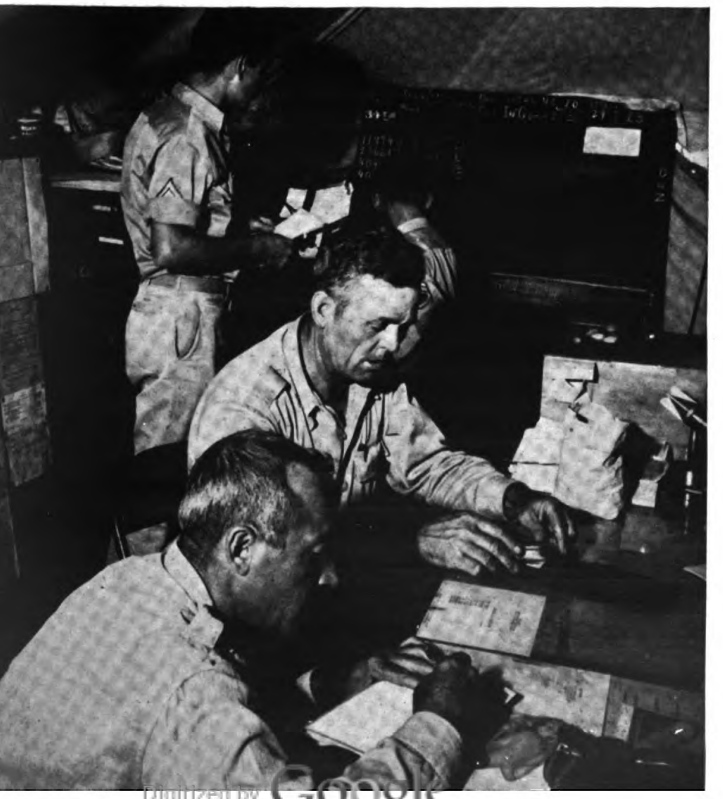
Bombardier Fitzsimmons said there was a brilliant flash of light accompanied by terrific noise and he thought the pilots on the flight deck had been hurt. The auxiliary fuel tanks, also hit, were spurting gasoline over all. Smoke began to pour from the padding and the wiring. Belly-gunner Andy Miller came up out of his position in a hurry and Radioman Hastings clambered back amidships to help the waist-gunners, bombardier and Dawley put out the several fires. The conflagration spread. Everybody decided to jump, when somebody hollered: "We're trapped!

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Mister Fix-it of Bengasi. Colonel Nero, foreground, on daily checkup visits maintenance officers of the various groups. His never-ending problem is the care of wounded B-24 Liberators.

In Rommel's Seat. General Ent, center, occupies chair at War Room table where Rommel planned his own defeat. Here American group commanders gather to outline detail work of next raid.



The bomb bay doors won't open!" Goodgion climbed back into his top turret and tried to escape through the hatch. The bulk of his parachute made it impossible.

During the confusion, Pilot Kendall rang the bell, and all hands made their way to the flight deck. "Can't you get the fire out?" he yelled. "What the hell's the matter with you, go back and try again." The boys did quench most of it and Kendall managed to catch up with the rest of his group.

"Yes," he told me as we sat munching K ration bars in the shadow of the repaired 'Lucky,' "but our ship was using 130 gallons of gas an hour. By that time we had only 5 hours' supply left, not enough to get back to Bengasi, and the nearest base was 3 hours away, on the southeastern tip of Sicily, on a field 800 yards long.

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ATC Comes Through. *(top)* Much-needed spare engines for B-24's have just been flown in by the Air Transport Command from replacement center to Bengasi. Colonel Nero, foreground, begins inspection of the replacement engines. *(below)* The engines have been mounted in a Liberator and are being given a workout. Note bombs around plane like chicks around mother hen.

It was ticklish. Our hydraulic system was off and we had to hand-crank the landing wheels. And we had no brakes.

"Just over the field, No. 3 engine coughed. We did manage to make the runway, but without brakes we weren't on it long. We went right over the top of a small hill into the midst of an English camp where mechanics were at work repairing two P-40's. The 'Lucky' still rolling strong, smashed into the two fighters, ran over five pup tents and cots, and finally came to a stop with the camp kitchen right under our wing. Belly-gunner Miller shouted, 'At least we can eat.' With that we jumped out of the windows post haste."



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COLONEL WOOD RELAYS DECISIONS MADE AT HEADQUARTERS TO HIS GROUP OFFICERS AND THEY OUTLINE DETAIL WORK FOR NEXT MISSION

The crew spied a British sergeant, who, instead of being upset about the wreckage caused by the runaway "Lucky" was delighted that now the job was one of salvage rather than further repair. Three gallons of wine were produced and Yanks and British joined in celebration.

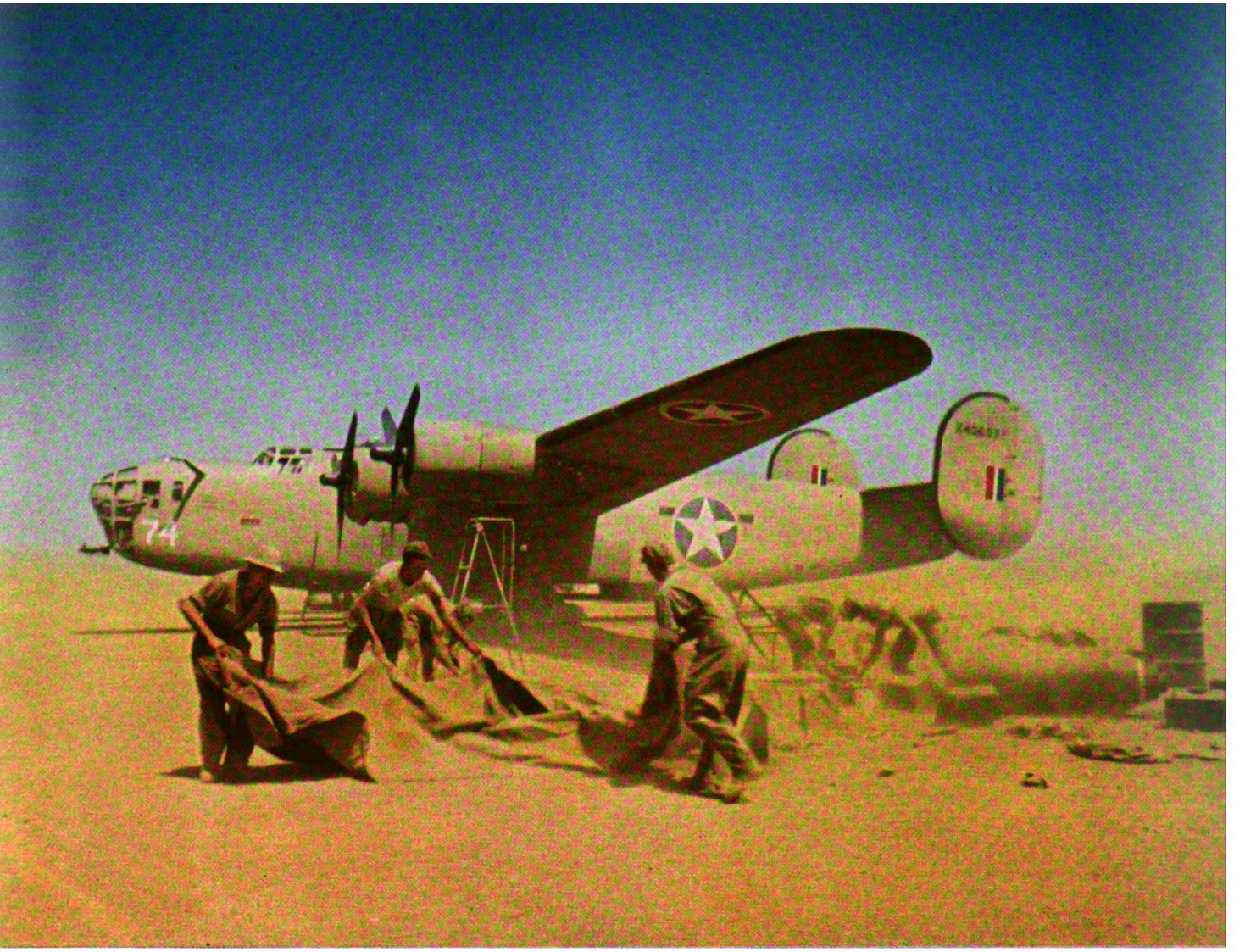
The "Lucky" and her crew stayed two days in the little British camp. After repairing the ship as best they could, they flew back to Bengasi with wheels down, temporary patches over flak holes, and a 5-gallon keg of wine. They poured a cup for me which I relished, but they had far better reason than I to enjoy it.

The saga of the "Lucky" was one of many in the IXth Bomber Command. From Ploesti, as from scores of other raids, the Liberators returned after taking severe beatings. One had a 6-foot hole in the wing, another fifty-two shell holes inflicted by 20-millimeter guns.

There were forty ack-ack holes in one Lib that had been jumped by eighteen pursuit ships, and although elevators and ailerons were shot out, the crew flew her all the way from Ploesti to Cyprus with but one rudder—the only control it had. Three times the boys thought of bailing out, but they stuck to their ship, and somehow it brought them in.

"It will take ten men working four days to fix her," casually commented Colonel Nero, just as though he had all the facilities in the world with which to patch up the battered warplanes instead of makeshift workbenches out in the

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WHEN TARPS ARE REMOVED AND AN UNDERCURRENT OF EXCITEMENT PREVAILS IN THE CAMP, THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE WIND OTHER THAN SAND

open desert and a couple of homemade cranes for heavy lifting. What he had most of was a shortage of repair parts and materials, and the cussed, ever-present sand which, unless great care was taken, would ruin delicate mechanisms. One wondered how a plane, with all its numberless parts, could withstand the constant penetration of the dust and sand.

"In spite of the dust, we have had to change an engine in 6 hours," said the Colonel, "and that's faster than any well-equipped repair shop can do it."

Days of activity at Bengasi tended to make me forget the fact that we were in a combat area. One morning, while I was photographing a plane and its crew, an MP rushed up in a jeep to announce that ten enemy paratroopers had just landed and been captured at the end of the field. He warned us to be on the alert for any others who might be lurking about.

Nobody but I seemed startled, and I was relieved to see the turret gunner climb up and check his gun.

The boys told me that after their last raid on Rome, a detail of enemy paratroopers had landed in the Bengasi area with demolition bombs. The Nazis, at night, surprised two guards, slit their throats, blew up a Liberator and disappeared. Next morning, two of them surrendered. Hunger and thirst brought the rest of the detachment out of the desert in a few days.

Sunday, except for church services, was much

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Belly Gunner Andy Miller of the "Lucky" has an armful. Cleaned, ready for action, Andy's machine gun goes into position.

Gas for the planes of America is trucked to the bombers on the afternoon before take-off. Empty gas cans mark the desert highway.



like every other day at the Command. Every officer and man continued with his duties. Sunday or not, the war goes on. The enemy is at work and, until he quits, the work of our men must continue unabated.

In the evening of my first Sunday at the Command, I listened to a conversation between a major in charge of operations and his flight control officer. They were discussing the crews to be sent on a forthcoming mission and whether a recently promoted pilot had the necessary experience for the maneuver. It is a heavy responsibility that rests on the shoulders of these officers — selecting the men to take part in a dangerous mission. Involving as they do the destinies of fine young chaps, some of whom will never return, these decisions must rest on the factors of ability, experience, leadership, and nerve, never upon personal likes and dislikes. The success of every mission depends greatly on these decisions and, frankly, I did not envy those who were making them now. I left them to their depressing task and

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There is trouble brewing in Libya, to be served up in Germany. Jeeps overflow with boys on their way to service bombers.

returned to my tent.

The next day the sandstorm was worse than usual. Despite this, the increased tempo about the camp and Colonel Nero's darting everywhere in his jeep, checking and rechecking the number of planes, meant only one thing — a mission, and soon. All were working like beavers to prepare every possible bomber. A repair job 99 percent finished could not be considered complete. Absolutely every part must be in working condition and thoroughly tested.

A huge gasoline trailer rolled out behind its powerful tractor to refuel the ships. Staff Sgt. Elmer (Bill) Dawley of New Jersey was there, checking his machine guns, and Staff Sgt. Andy Miller of New York, about to put his in place. Other gunners were dusting off the ammunition. By mid afternoon, the heavily loaded Liberators were sitting calmly on the sands, ready to carry their cargo of destruction to the enemy.

At four o'clock all groups had marshaled their planes in readiness for early morning take-off.

Staff Sergeant Bill Dawley makes sure of clear vision so he can add another swastika to those painted below machine guns.



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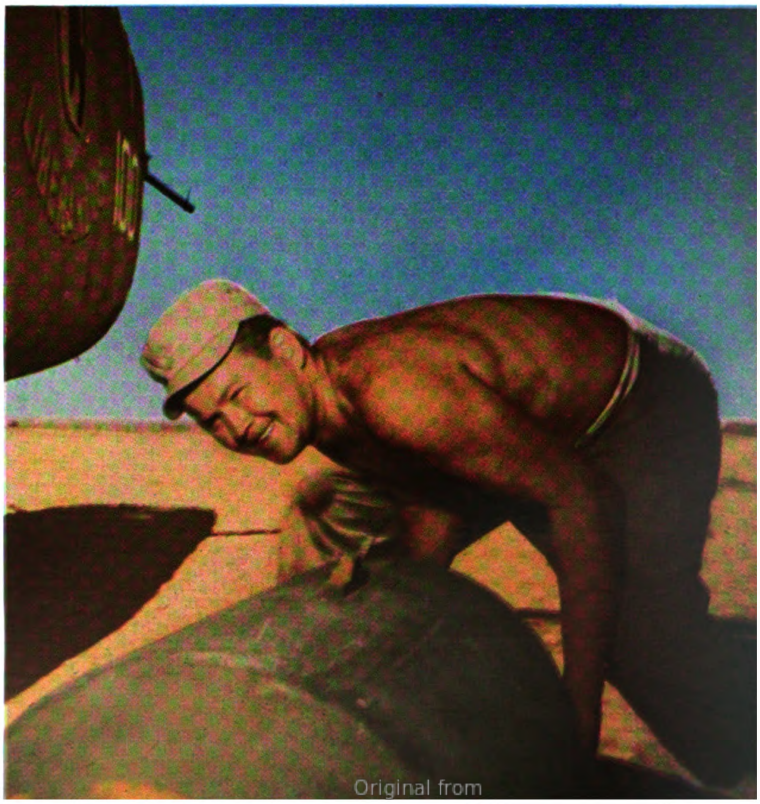
← **Beneath 1000-pounder** destined for Wiener Neustadt, crew member in bomb bay dusts ammunition to prevent possible fouling.

"Roll them bombs! Roll them bombs! Roll them o'er the sand—roll them to the bomb bays, boys—come on, lend a hand."

Gassed and checked, the ships, each with its full load of 1,000-pound bombs, sat low on the desert like a flock of vengeful birds.

Back at camp, the boys, in all stages of dress and undress, sat around on the empty gas cans, as they waited for briefing. Supper would follow the briefing and the boys had their mess kits ready for the bustling dash into chow line. Meanwhile, some read letters, while others carried on bull sessions and, on the surface, appeared totally indifferent to the danger ahead. No word was spoken about the possibility of some not coming back, but I know that each man was doing some mighty serious thinking. In browsing around, I found many writing letters. Headquarters had told me that previous to a mission many write what may conceivably be their last letter home.

Then came briefing, an out-of-doors session during which Maj. John A. Brooks III, from



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DESPITE HARD DAY'S PREPARATION FOR RAID AND MASCULINE APPETITES DEMANDING FOOD, FLIGHT CREWS MUST WAIT FOR BRIEFING SESSION

Greenville, Ohio, Operations Officer, gave details and instructions for the forthcoming mission. When it was over, we repaired to supper and an early turn-in.

I was tired that night and didn't even bother to dust off my blankets — just flopped on my cot. Strangely, I couldn't sleep. The moon was about three-quarters full, and the night was bright and very still. In the distance, the trucks continued to race back and forth, and their constant low rumble seemed to heighten the tenseness.

Dutch, a young soldier whose friendship I had previously won by the unfailing method of begging help, came in and offered to assist in changing my film. Instead, I asked him to help me change a bandage on my leg which I had injured in a fall the day before.

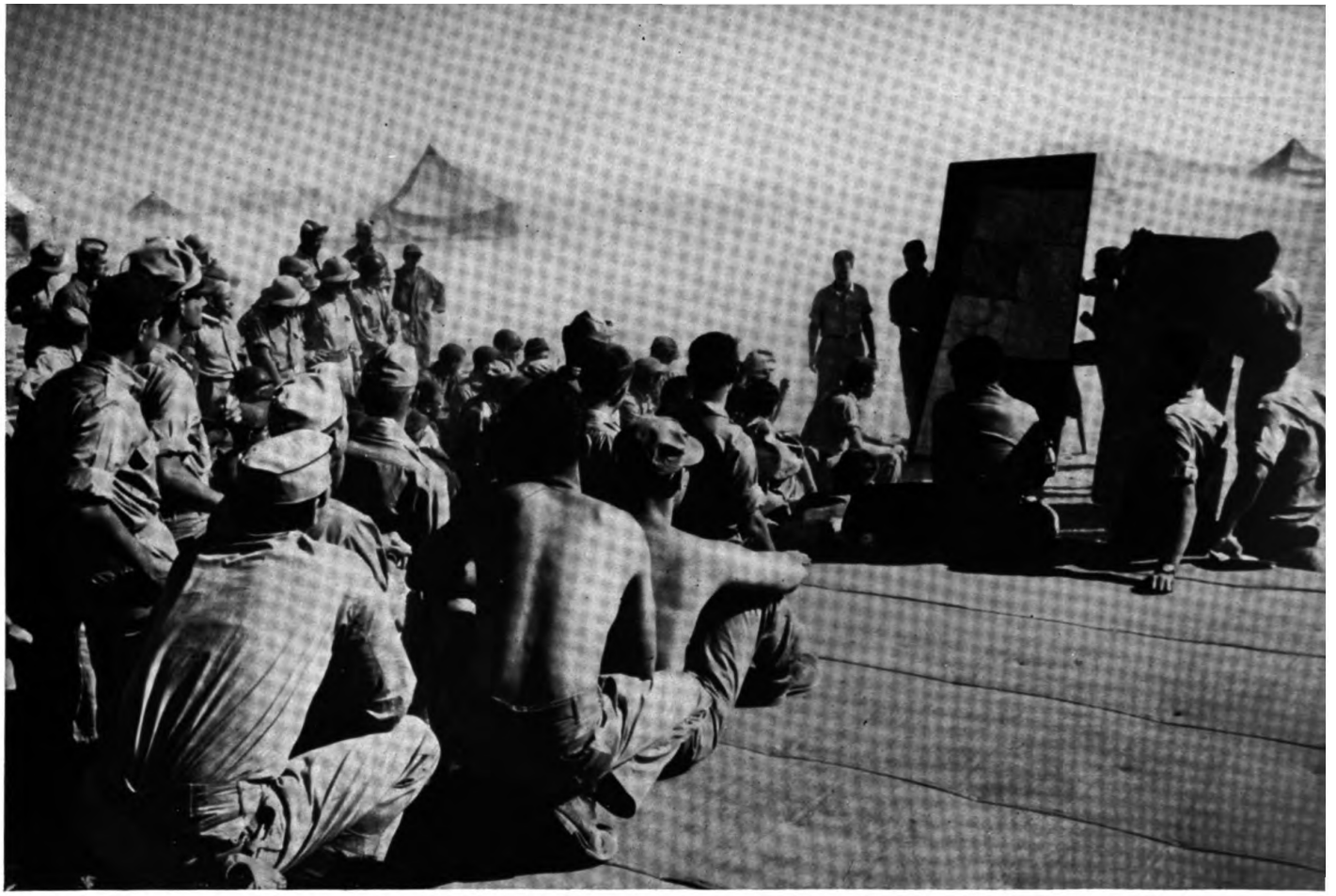
We talked about all the things two lonely men from home invariably find most interesting, things like what Dutch would do after the war, the best dishes we had ever eaten, and how good some ice-cold beer would taste. Meanwhile, Dutch's eyes had been centered on a colony of ants parading from one side of the tent to the other and into one of my bags. I explored and found a forgotten box of cookies. After brushing them off, we ate them with as much appetite as our nostalgia would allow. I knew Dutch was thinking that I could go home at any time, and it was true, but it only made me feel worse for him. Loneliness, ants, sand, scorpions, wind, and still more sand — how much longer was that to be the fate of Dutch and the rest of the men?

Agreeing to wake me at 4:30 in the morning, he left. We both had to get some rest. But sleep wouldn't come. Faces of the boys I had photographed at the briefing session came clearly to mind, all of them young and purposeful.

Before the briefing, I had asked Major Brooks about the possibility of holding the boys over so that I could get a series of pictures.

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PREMISSION POW-WOW. BRIEFING OFFICER EXPLAINS PLAN OF RAID, ROUTES TO AND FROM TARGET, ILLUSTRATING WITH CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

"Why, certainly," he had replied. "I'll ask for volunteers."

Some of them knew of my work and had been visibly pleased that I wanted so many pictures of them. But who wouldn't like the idea of having the home folks see pictures of how their boys look in the remote war lands? They'd be the last to think it, but each one of them was a brave man good-humoredly carrying out a dirty and difficult job, and I had wanted those pictures to tell that story.

Work done, many of the boys with cameras had gathered around to take pictures of me. At such moments one is made aware of his inadequacies. But I had concealed my misgiving and posed as majestically as possible.

Then I had helped them with a few of their camera problems and given them some film, which was a scarce item. Although the boys had been more than cooperative in posing, I worried, as I lay there on my sandy cot, for fear I had misused their time. With a mission ahead, they needed every possible moment for rest. I kept wondering how many of those lads whose images I had captured would—one cannot continue with thoughts such as these.

I dozed off. It seemed only a few minutes before Dutch was nudging me firmly and saying: "Hey! It's 4:30."

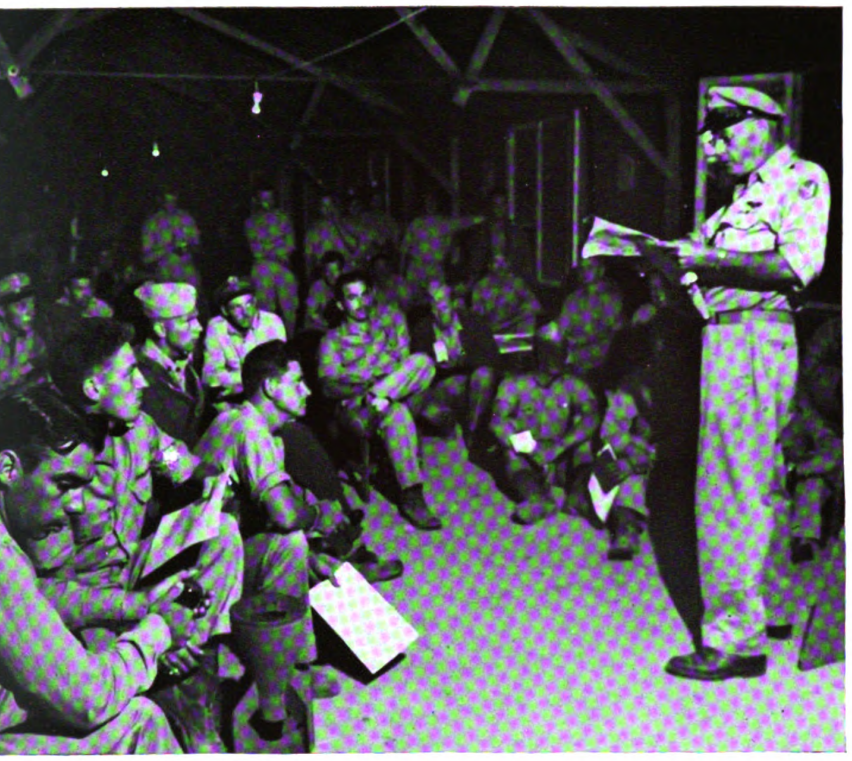
It was pitch dark. He helped me to carry the flash equipment and we stumbled groggily across the sand to the little building where the last-minute briefing session would be held.

The boys already were gathered and in a few minutes the intelligence officer called them to order. He gave out detailed weather reports for the various areas of approach and for that of the target. Then he instructed those who were taking pencil notes to destroy them after take-off.

The officer explained where they were to meet if there was a mishap and recourse to parachutes was taken.

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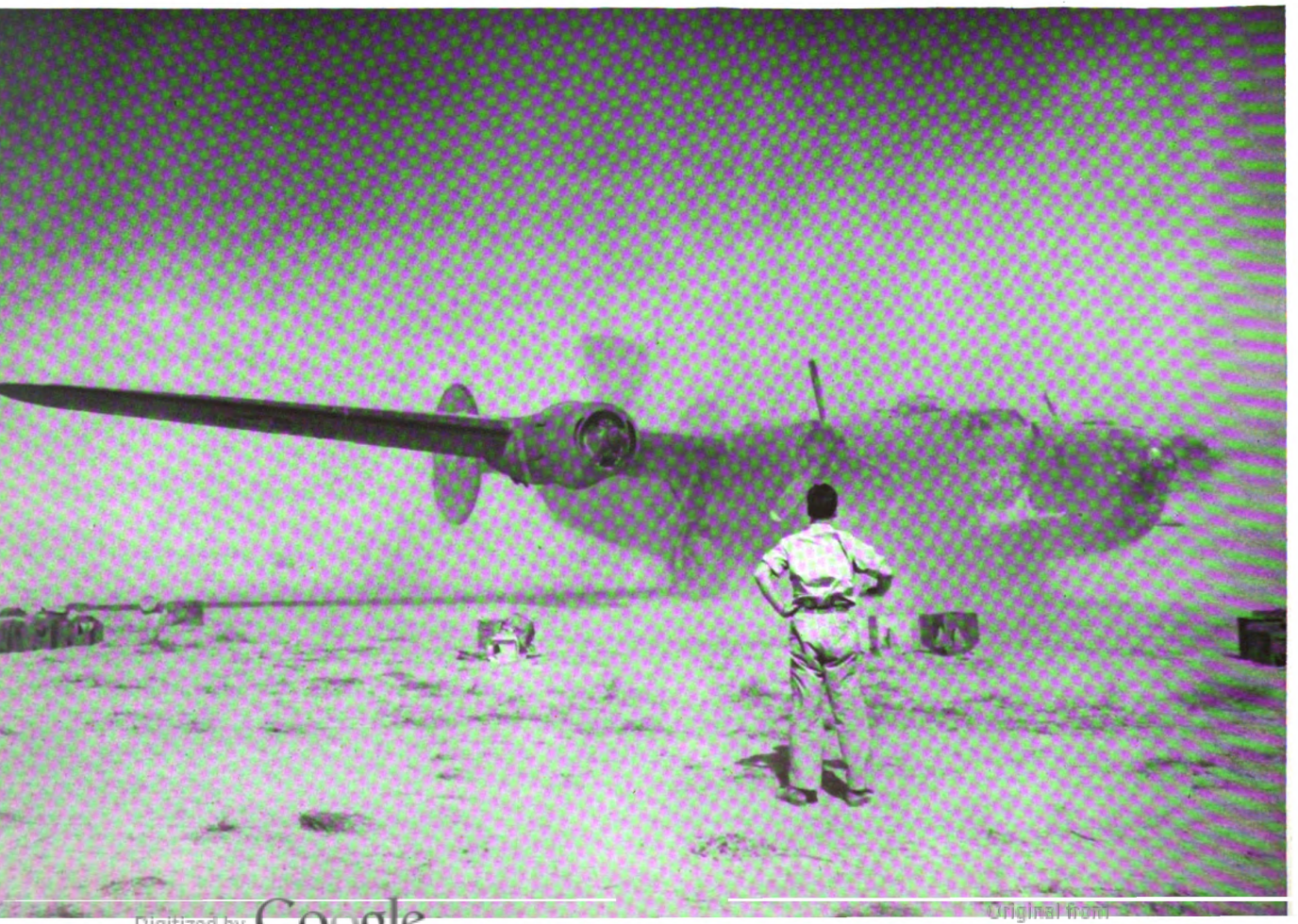


"Keep under cover," he told them. "You can expect enemy guards all over this mountainous area. Hide in the brush until this date and hour of rescue, then watch for this signal," he wrote them on the board. "A boat will arrive and pick you up."

Then Major Brooks went over last-minute plans of the flying formation, the altitude at which each group would fly, and the route home. "Take mosquito nets and a blanket along with you," he warned.

During the briefing, which took but a short time, I noticed the various attitudes and reactions revealed on the faces of the boys. The mission was an important one and some were keyed to fever pitch. Others, unmoved, appeared to take it all in their stride, as though it were an ordinary, workaday

Last-minute briefing for pilots and navigators. Maj. Harold H. Ashley (California), gives special information pertaining to possible emergencies. They'll soon be in big bomber like "Sac-time Sally" (*below*) whose four motors thunder ominously in final test.



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job, nothing more than hoeing potatoes or sweeping out the grocery store back home.

"The worst part of the raid for me is the night before," one crew member told me. "After breakfast, though, everything is okay. I used to feel like a rookie player on a big football team, but after several experiences, I began to gain confidence. I know now that I'll never see the shot that hits me, so I don't worry much about that any more."

A sergeant said that it wasn't the first few missions that bothered him, but, after about the ninth trip, he found he was beginning to sweat it out. Eventually he was sent to a "flak shack," or a "Gremlin Grange," the airmen's names for a rest home. After a few weeks the sergeant returned to his outfit, and although he again saw considerable action, there was no recurrence of nerves.



This is it! Out of the morning mist comes America's might, kicking up sand wake, and packed with its lethal load of steel and high explosives. Good hunting!

Another lad voiced what is, perhaps, a typical reaction when he said: "I'm nervous until my ship gets hit; then I get mad and want to fight."

General briefings, such as the one I had photographed the previous night, last approximately 45 minutes. But separate briefings are held for the various members of the crews; one for all pilots, one for all navigators, and so on. The bombardier's map of the target is studied closely by all members of a crew. Much shorter, last-minute affairs are attended, as a rule, only by the officers, who convey the final instructions to their men.

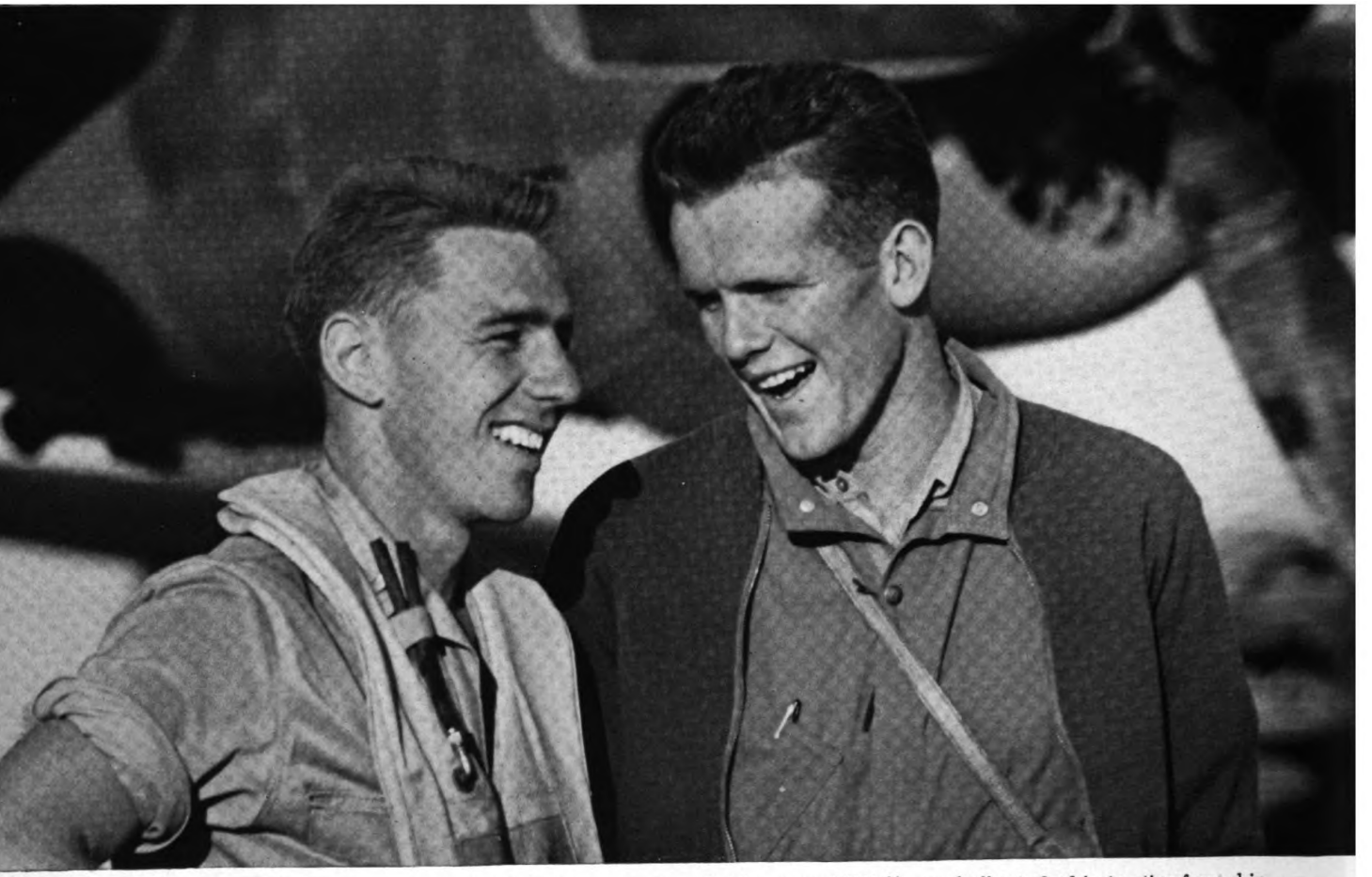
It was an awesome and magnificent sight to see all the four-motored Liberators of the group lined up on the African desert waiting for the signal to take off. I thought of all the other groups stationed along a 40-mile strip of Mediterranean shore and of the power, the tremendous power that nothing could stop. I was frightened by it, not for myself, not for the enemy who had furthered its growth, but for all of us who were capable of producing this force and perhaps incapable of producing the discernment to wield it with justice and wisdom.

I watched some of the boys standing near their ships talking quietly, often grinning, sometimes laughing aloud, or perhaps crouched in a huddle checking their map, and I knew they too sensed the power that was in their hands. There was unmistakable confidence in their attitude—confidence in themselves, in each other, and in their planes. I guess I was more nervous than anybody on the field.

General Ent had approved my request to fly part of the way with the group, to enable me to get some flight pictures. Even though I was ignorant as to the location of the target, and would be flown nowhere near it, I felt a little jittery until I recalled how the boys who would do the real fighting were taking it.

The General authorized my plane and assigned Capt. Daniel C. Minnick as pilot and Lieut. Allen L. Green as copilot. The ship's name was "Captain and the Kids," a name which upon my intrusion would certainly become inappropriate

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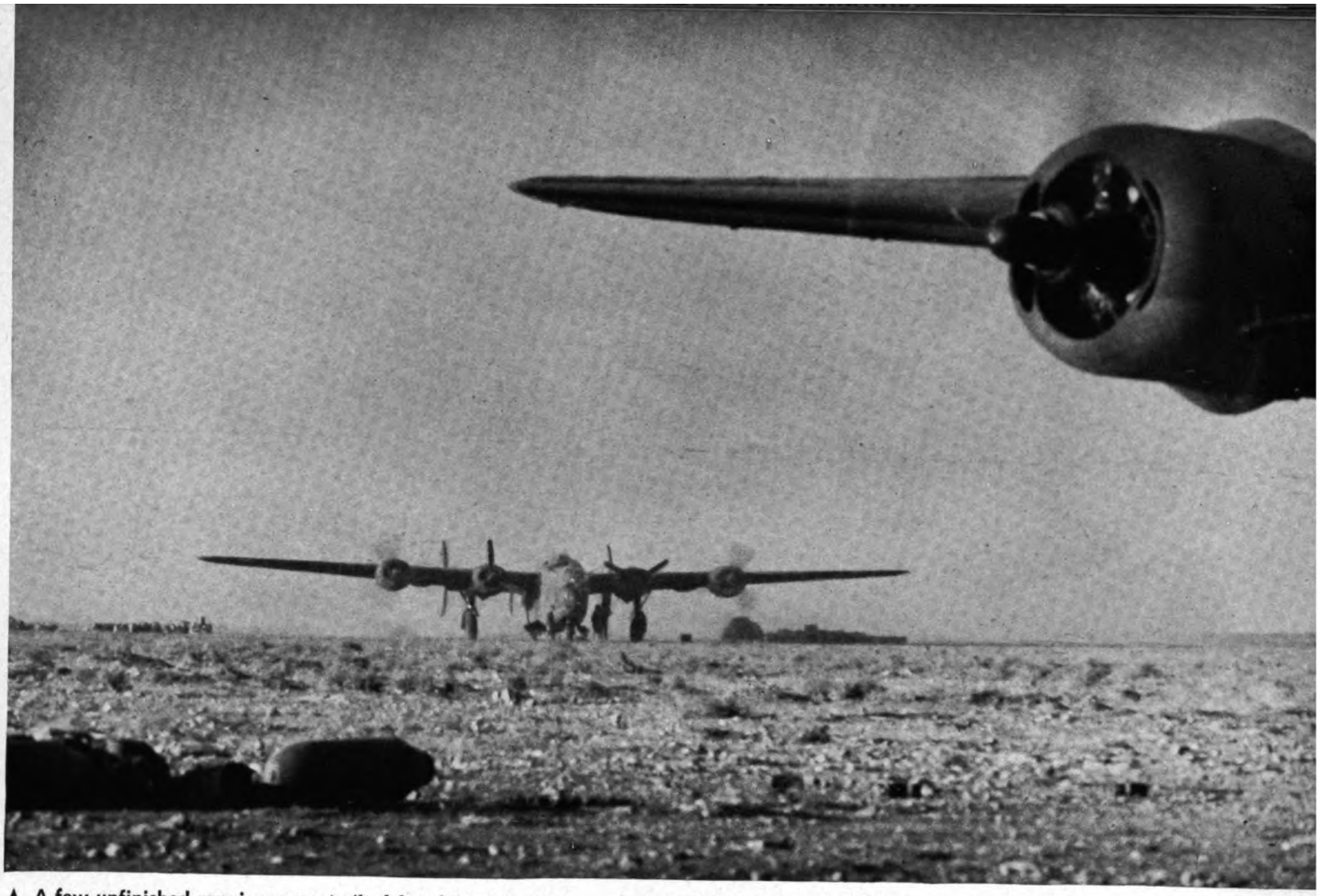


All in a day's work for these confident lads (photographed seconds before the take-off). They know they've got what it takes.

The crew of "Wolf-waggin," gets final instruction from skipper; then each man will clamber through bomb bay into position



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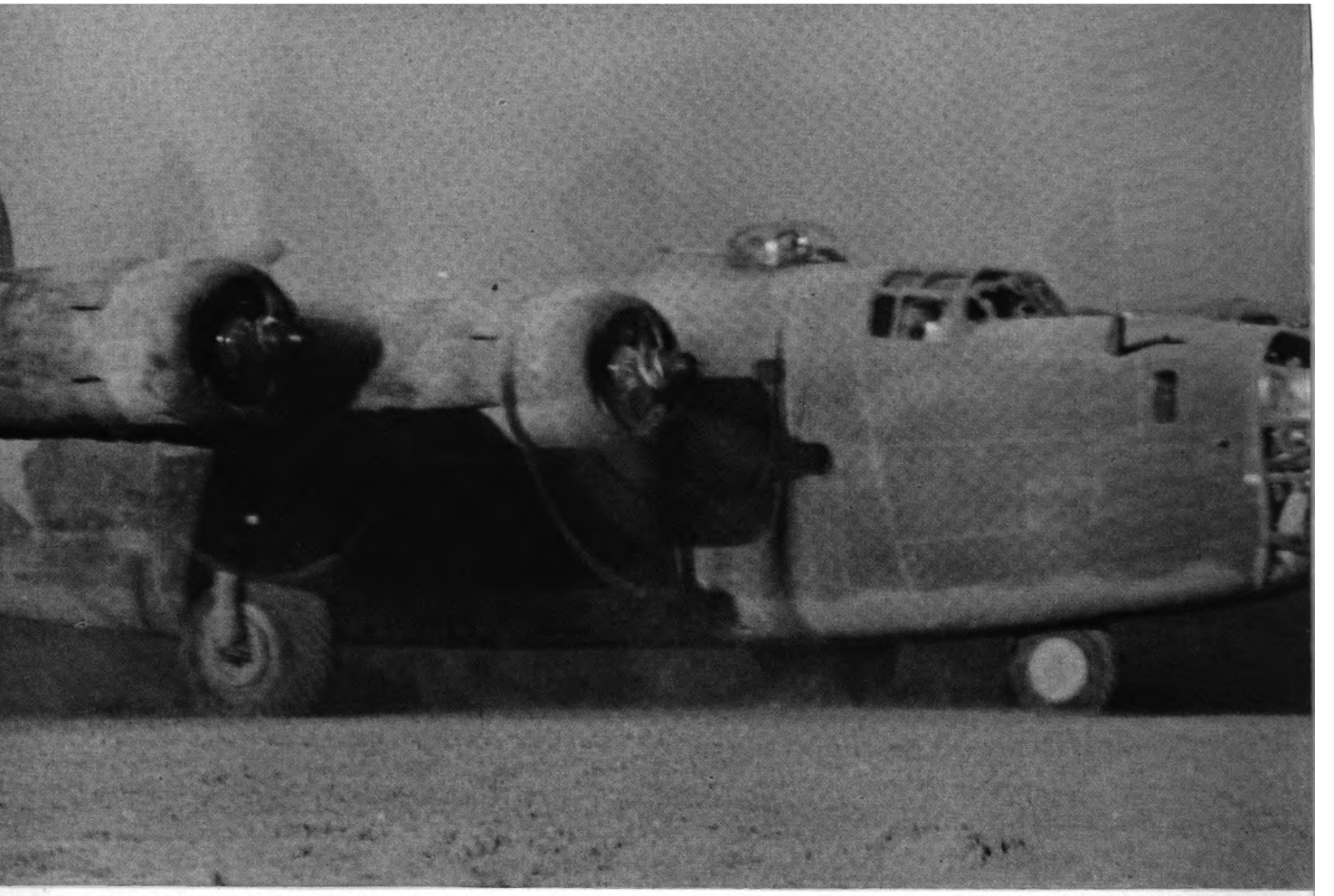


↑ **A few unfinished repairs** momentarily delayed this ship. Soon she'll roar across the desert to her position in the line with others.

↓ **For centuries past,** the Libyan sun has looked down upon men gathered in battle, but never before has it seen greater power.



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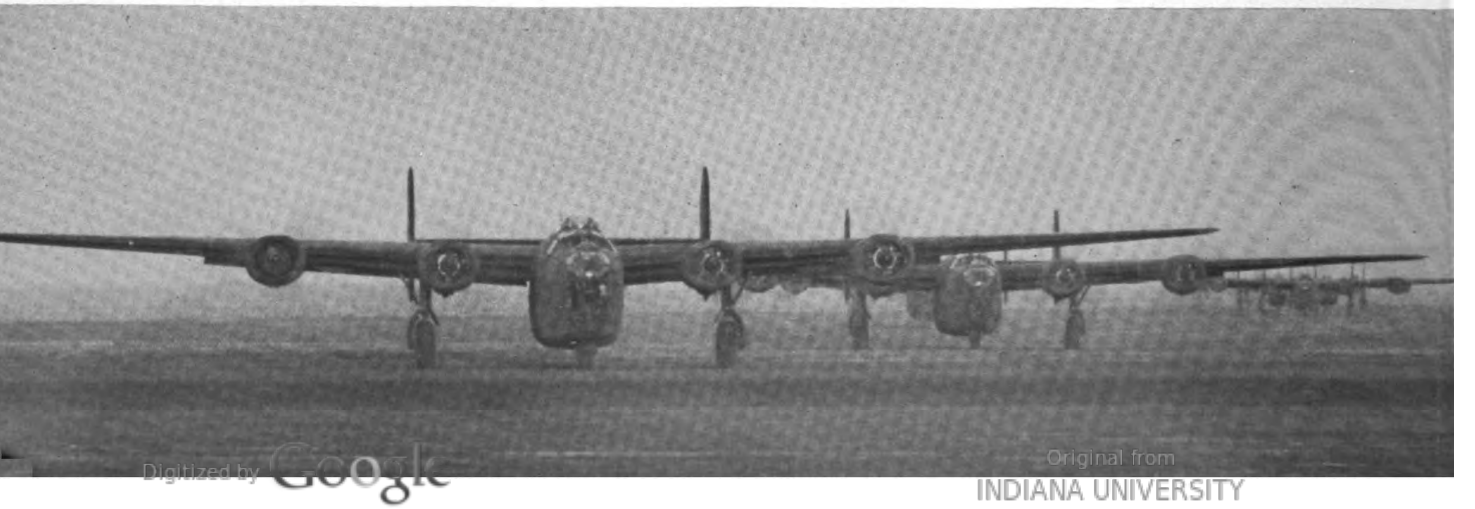
WITH A DEAFENING ROAR OF THE MOTORS THE LIBS AT 15-SECOND INTERVALS SPEED ACROSS THE RUNWAY, RISE GRACEFULLY FROM GROUND TO SKY

but which, nevertheless, lent a vicarious mood of abandon to my forty-year-old bones.

After Dutch helped load my paraphernalia on board, we stood around in the gray light of dawn and waited. We hadn't long to wait. The signal came and the three huge Liberators that were to lead the way came roaring down the runway in formation. I think it was one of the most thrilling sights of my life, certainly unprecedented, to see those flying behemoths coming straight at me, their twelve whirling propellers kicking up a sand wake of cyclonic intensity. The realization that more, more, and yet more were to follow was staggering to the imagination.

The lead ships flashed past, and in 15 seconds another; this continued until all the planes of the group save one were in the air, circling and forming into their prearranged units. The lone

TIMING OF TAKE-OFF MUST BE CORRELATED WITH PLANES OF OTHER GROUPS SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO DELAY IN ORGANIZING FLYING FORMATION



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bomber remaining on the field had blown a tire. There was no further damage and no one was hurt, but it was a disappointed bunch of boys who climbed out, knowing they had to be left behind. Just before boarding his ship, Major Brooks came up to me and, smiling to prove his unconcern, handed me his wallet. "Dmitri," he said, "will you please give this to Dan Minnick. He'll know." Most of the men arrange the care of their property with a crew member not scheduled to take part in a bombing mission—just in case.

Our own take-off came toward the last and was uneventful, but before we climbed aboard I noticed that the eyes of those left behind on the ground were following every move of the ships already in the air, and it was apparent that the sweating-out process of the ground crews and the officers who were not assigned to the mission was well under way. Just before leaving, I had photographed three men of a ground crew who had climbed into a captured Italian reconnaissance car, a peculiar contraption that circles on all four wheels. It was built especially for driving over sand, and with its four-wheel drive and four-wheel steering mechanism it can cover ground impossible even for a jeep. The faces of the boys in the car had been turned straight up toward the morning sun. Later, after we had taken off and gained altitude, I looked back. They were still looking skyward at the planes, which were now rapidly vanishing in the direction of the target.

In the "Captain and the Kids" Captain Minnick and Lieutenant Allen flew me for about 2 hours beside a group of bombers. Part of the time we flew high over the Mediterranean, above lazy islands of clouds standing out in sharp white contrast to the blue of the sea, always beside us the formations of B-24's laden with cargoes of destruction—the only remedy, apparently, that a sick enemy was willing to swallow. Then we turned back toward our field, and from the tail gunner's position I watched the bombers disappear and wondered what I would be feeling had I been permitted to accompany them all the way to the target.



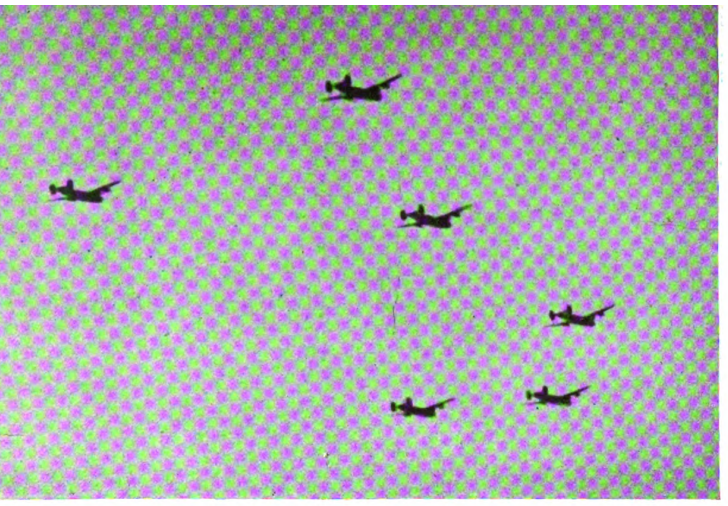
PILOT HAP KENDALL AT THE WHEEL OF THE "LUCKY" BARKS AN ORDER

After we returned to the field from the photographic mission, I told Colonel Wood of the Group how impressed I was by the well-organized take-off. He explained his problem—to get the men of his group and their planes all on time at the take-off. There can be no delays, for a big raid, with hundreds, even thousands of ships participating, demands that the time of departure for each group must be perfectly correlated with the departure of the many other groups. He

LAST-MINUTE ENGINE TROUBLE — AND THE FORMATION COULDN'T WAIT



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added that the morning's take-off had required 11 minutes and "that was very slow and nothing to brag about."

I found Colonel Nero busy checking damaged planes. He gave me a swastika which had been cut off a wrecked German plane by his mechanics. A few days earlier, I had expressed a desire to take one home with me as a souvenir, but I had been unable to rip it off. It is in my New York studio as these words are written, and pasted on it is a small slip of paper bearing these words: "United States B-24's flew in daylight 1,250 miles from North Africa to Wiener Neustadt in Austria, 27 miles south of Vienna, where they dropped 330,000 pounds of bombs on an aircraft factory."

On so small a paper is described the tremendous accomplishment of the boys whose return to camp was being awaited so restlessly.

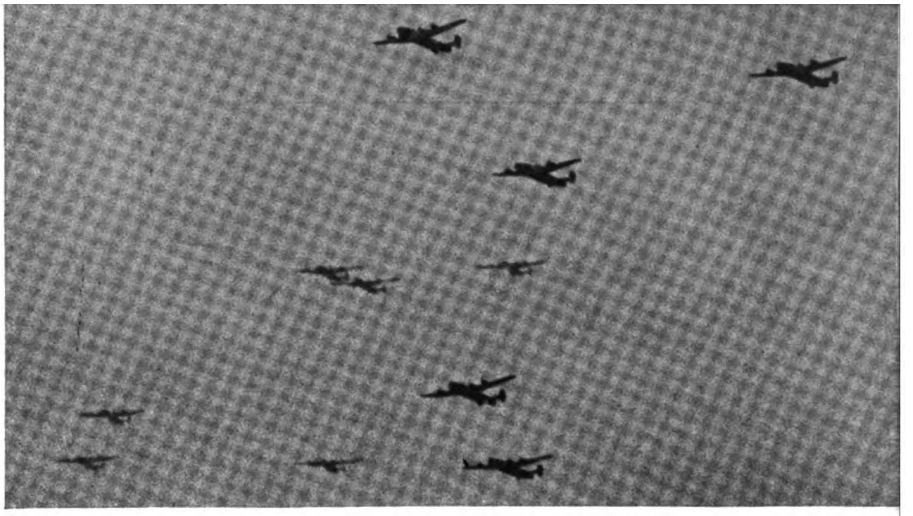
At 3:30 in the afternoon one of the planes returned prematurely because of engine trouble. The members of the crew climbed out with little to say, but disgruntled scarcely describes their mood. Lieut. Dale Sisson of Phoenix, Ariz., the pilot, had missed his raid, spoiling a long and excellent record of which he was exceptionally proud.

Later, in the Colonel's jeep, we drove along the Mediterranean shore, passing a spot where fourteen saboteurs had landed from an Axis submarine one dark night. They had trekked inland some little distance and were busy drying their clothes when a native spotted them. He must

THEY'RE OFF, AND SAFELY. COL JACK WOOD (RIGHT) HAS SEEN IT OFTEN. HE AND HIS MEN WAIT APPREHENSIVELY FOR RETURN FROM MISSION



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have been an exceedingly courageous Wog, for he crept up silently across the sand and, single handed, captured all of them.

Upon return to camp, I was immediately impressed by the atmosphere of subdued tension permeating the base. Officers and their staffs, the ground crews, all were engaged in *sweating it out*. The term is used in all branches of military service, and even civilians are adopting it. Men sweat out a condition that demands waiting helplessly, nervously and anxiously, for something to take place, when there's not a thing they can do to hasten action. They sweat out waiting for mail from home, for their turn in chow line, or for a hoped-for promotion, but the interminable waiting for planes due back from a mission perhaps requires the most intense application of the observance. Nothing is said; the only indications of what's on their minds are the frequent and half-apprehensive glances skyward. These are quick glances, given surreptitiously. No one wants the other fellow to catch him at it, yet everyone knows they feel exactly the same way. Many pause in the middle of a sentence, thinking they hear the distant hum of motors.

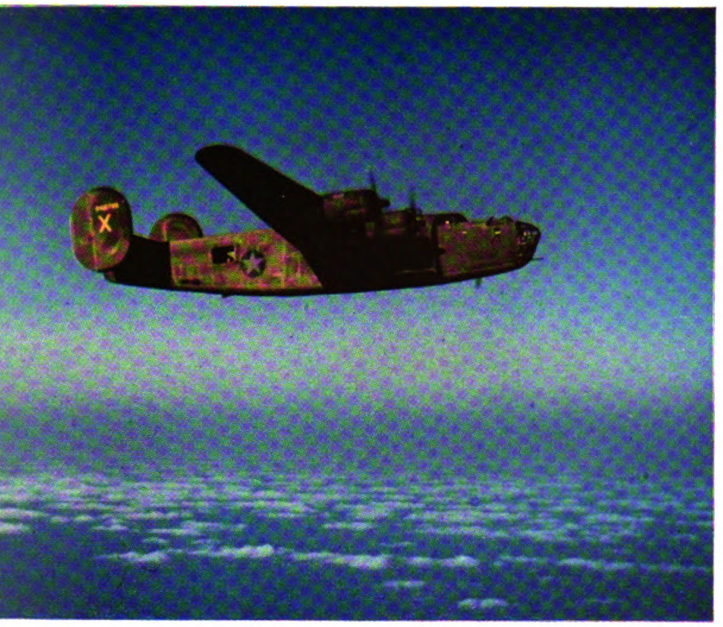
The air forces claim origin of the term, but it is more likely that they merely popularized it; Mark Twain used it in much the same sense that the serviceman does today.

During such times it's hard to concentrate on

FROM VANTAGE POINT OF CAPTURED ITALIAN JEEP, DUTCH AND GROUND CREW WATCH. THEY'LL SWEAT IT OUT FROM NOW UNTIL BOMBERS COME HOME



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High over the Mediterranean above lacy clouds, the B-24's roar on to their target. Pilot (*below*) concentrates on business ahead.



the work at hand. One little group had given up and was now engaged in one of their sedative pastimes. It is a gambling game and, so far as I was able to determine, without a name. It is played throughout Africa, India, England, and, I imagine, in many other war sectors where time hangs heavy. All that is needed are flies — live ones — some salt, and a glass or cup of water. Any number of players can "take a hand."

Each man catches his fly, douses it thoroughly in water for approximately five minutes, or long enough to produce inertia. Each player then deposits his lifeless fly on the packing case, or whatever is used as a gaming table, and pours a teaspoonful of salt over it. Wagers are laid and the kibitzing commences. The fly may not be touched, blown upon, or assisted in any way, but there is no rule against incantation and cheering. After several minutes there is a slight tremor in one of the salt piles and a fly totters out. As time elapses and the flies show more signs of life, the fervor increases, and the first fly to soar away wins the money for his bettor.

The sweating-out process is contagious, and I was becoming extremely restless. Deciding that a little activity would help, I hunted up Colonel Nero and found he was going to make an inspection of planes and parts at near-by groups. With the Colonel's permission, I got Dutch to help me and we loaded the cameras into the Colonel's jeep and drove off. Dutch complained about a pain in his side, and we took it easy going over the bumps. Among the planes we photographed was the "Battle Ax," one of the first of the Liberators to arrive in the Middle East. Having engaged in over fifty missions and been attacked in combat many times, it now had to be cannibalized.

Cannibalizing is a most practical method of conserving war matériel. It is the course followed when a ship becomes too badly damaged to make it worth repairing. Many a once proud and mighty bomber has reached the stage where it sits forlornly on the desert, with tires removed, perhaps tail assembly amputated, or an aileron missing, so that its sister ships may carry on their work. The motors, of course, and all spare parts

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of any future value are removed, cleaned, and stored away in protection from the ever ravaging sand. A cannibalized bomber, squatting sadly in the wastes of the North African desert, is a disconsolate object, a derelict in a sea of sand, a ghost ship invoking memories of its past glory.

There was little talk at supper that evening. Everyone was waiting for news of the mission. What conversation there was took the turn it most often does in the desert, in India, and in all the other faraway places. Food. The soldiers torture themselves with the subject. Some of them even keep accurate records of the last time they indulged in their favorite dishes.

"Dmitri," Maj. Norman C. Appold told me, "I've had no fresh milk for nine months; no ice cream for ten months; no Coca-Cola for twelve months; no apple pie à la mode, or lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches, or chocolate malteds, for over a year."

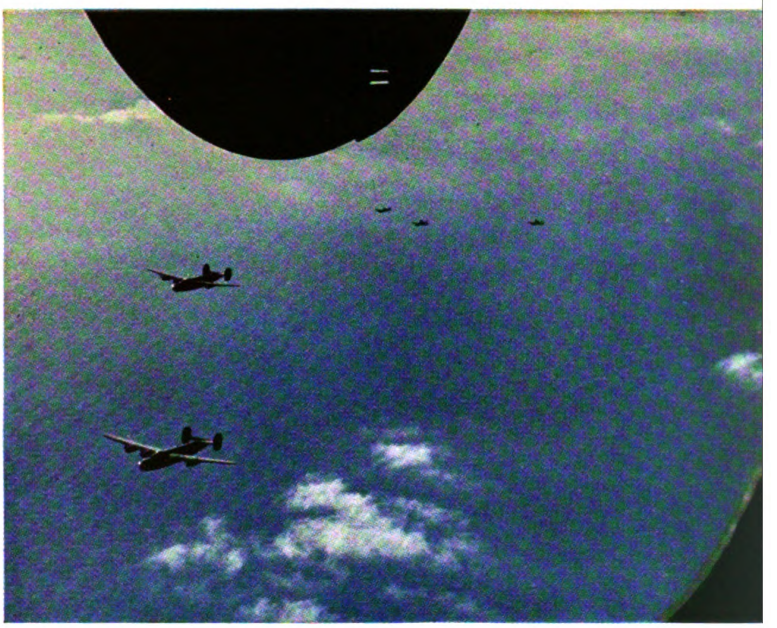
After supper we had a surprise. Visitors from home! My friend Col. Bruce Logie, ATC Public Relations Officer, arrived from Accra looking very pleased with himself, for accompanying him were Jack Benny, Larry Adler, Anna Lee and Wini Shaw. They had come to put on a series of shows for the boys of the IXth Bomber Command.

"As the IXth seems to be extended throughout the desert for some forty miles along the Mediterranean, they thought it a much simpler task to send our party around to the various groups, rather than to gather all the men together at once," said Jack, "but they forgot to give us cages for the girls."

After Colonel Nero and I had been introduced all around, the Colonel said, as composedly as possible, "Do you know, you are the first women I have seen in over a year?"

We drove the girls around the area, stopping here and there to talk with ground crews. The boys were tremendously intrigued to see, amidst their rugged he-man quarters, these delightfully feminine beings. The girls realized this and applied themselves unstintingly to being gracious and gentle as only women can.

One of the bombers came in from the day's



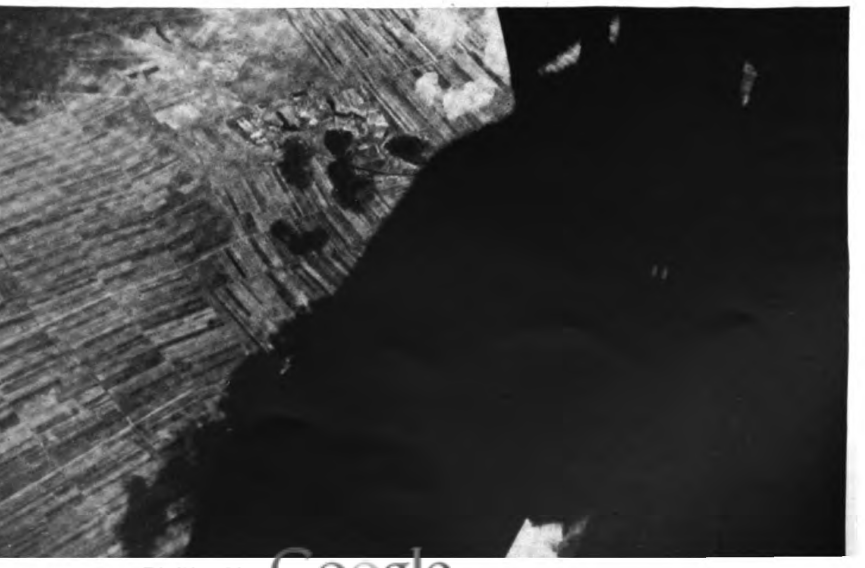
Over enemy territory. Upon approaching zone of fire, bombers will fly close formation for concentrated attack of enemy fighters.



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Top turret gunner looks like this to any Messerschmitt pilot who might dare make a frontal attack on this Lib. (*below*) From bomb bay it's bombs away.



mission and parked a short distance from the group of entertainers. The crew jumped out and saw the girls waiting on the desert. The expressions on their faces must have revealed to the troupe how welcome and how necessary was their presence. With this new and surprising attraction in camp, the thoughts of the recently returned men veered abruptly and happily away from their latest experience. As we stood there talking and laughing, another ship came in. The pilot had evidently seen the women from above, for he buzzed down over us, very low, the gentlemanly flier's method of doffing his hat.

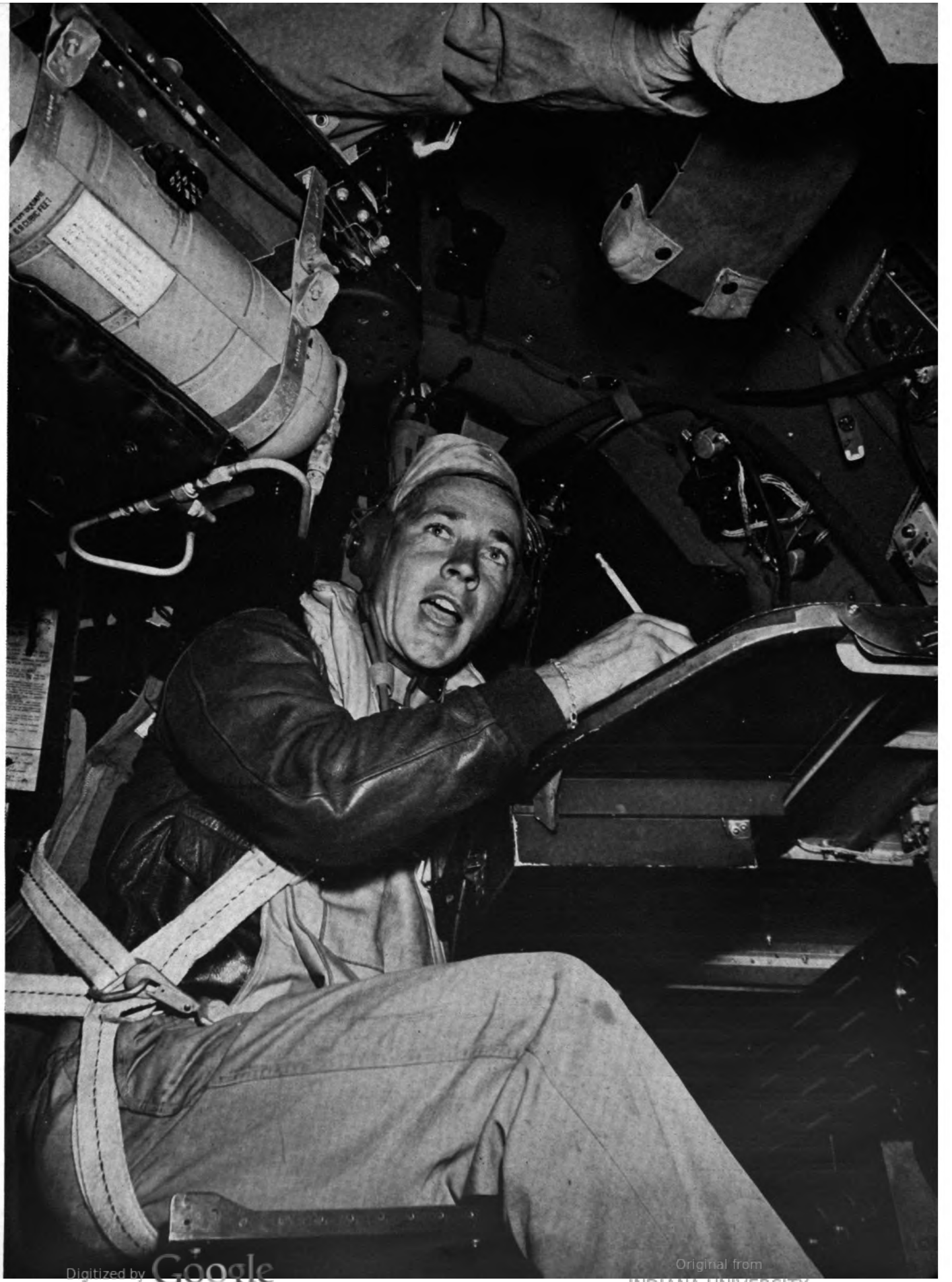
After the performance that night, we learned that the mission had been very successful. A radio broadcast was aimed directly from the IXth Bomber Command to the States, during which some of the men who had been on the raid related their experiences.

Lieutenant Colonel Fiegel opened the broadcast and then introduced Staff Sgt. Isaac Jacobs, who said: "From my ringside seat in the sky I got a really good view of our target, which was one building of a U-shaped assembly plant. I saw a string of bombs cut right through the curved part of the big U, then another cut across the middle of the U. It was a complete knockout, and in an instant flames were blowing right through the big structure. All in our ship came through without a scratch. The ack-ack was farther away than a fifty-cent seat at the Philadelphia stadium, and the fighters never put in an appearance."

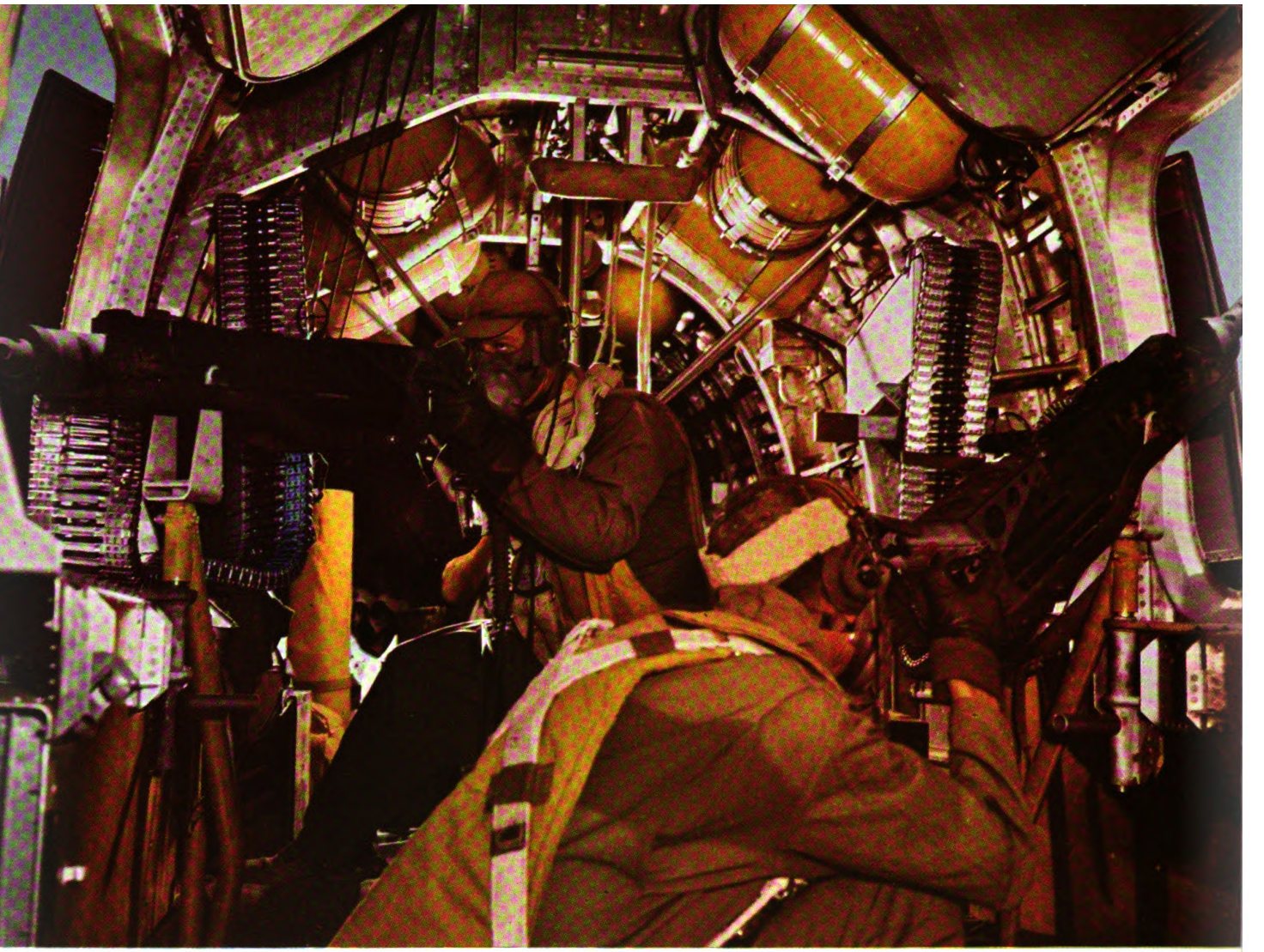
Then Major Brooks, copilot of the "Scorpion," the lead ship over the target, took the "mike." "The boys of

→ **A mysterious maze** to us, perhaps, but not so to the navigator, whose accurate calculations guide the bomber direct to the target and home again.

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Here they come —three of 'em at eight o'clock, one at two o'clock. At high altitudes it's oxygen masks, flak suits, Mae Wests, earphones, parachutes, mitts—and accurate shooting. Tail gunner victorious in first blast at enemy, demands more ammunition. →

our group described it as a 'piece of cake.' We attacked on Friday the thirteenth—a lucky day for us, unlucky for Germany." He added, "If my father, Col. John Brooks, of an Ordnance Depot, is listening in, he'll be glad to know that I got back safely, and that some of those bombs he helps send us were dropped where they'll do the most good."

At the close of the broadcast, a familiar voice said: "Hello, again, this is Jack Benny speaking. Larry Adler, Anna Lee, Wini Shaw, and I have just played a performance here under a full desert moon. This is a great bunch of American kids . . ."

While the mission had been a piece of cake for some of the planes, it had been "mafeesh" for others. Six ships had not returned; sixty-three men were missing. Some of these had jumped with chutes from their crippled bombers right over the target. Most of the losses occurred in a unit of the IXth farther up the shore. The troupe had put on a show for this group only the night before. About an hour after the broadcast, Jack and I heard the news of the losses. Tears came to his eyes, and his was a very sober face indeed, as he said, "To think we gave those boys their last laughs." Sentimental? Surely. But there are no stoics, for any length of time at least, among these men of precarious fate.

Whenever an arrival of bombers is expected back from a raid, trucks, with seats arranged along the sides, roll out on the airfield to meet

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FROM SUBZERO TEMPERATURE BACK TO THE SUN-BAKED DESERT, FLIGHT CREW BOARDS A WAITING TRUCK FOR QUESTIONING AT HEADQUARTERS

the men and to transport them back to camp and headquarters. Ambulances, uninhibitedly called "meat wagons," and crash crews as well are always on hand in case there are wounded, or in case a disabled plane must crash-land. A plane with wounded aboard drops a red flare when approaching the field, and the Red Cross ambulance is at its side almost before the wheels stop rolling. The injured are then removed from the ship with utmost care and rushed to the field

EACH MAN WILL CHECK IN AND REPORT TO INTELLIGENCE OFFICER HIS VERSION OF THE MISSION. HERE ARE BORN OFFICIAL WAR COMMUNIQUES



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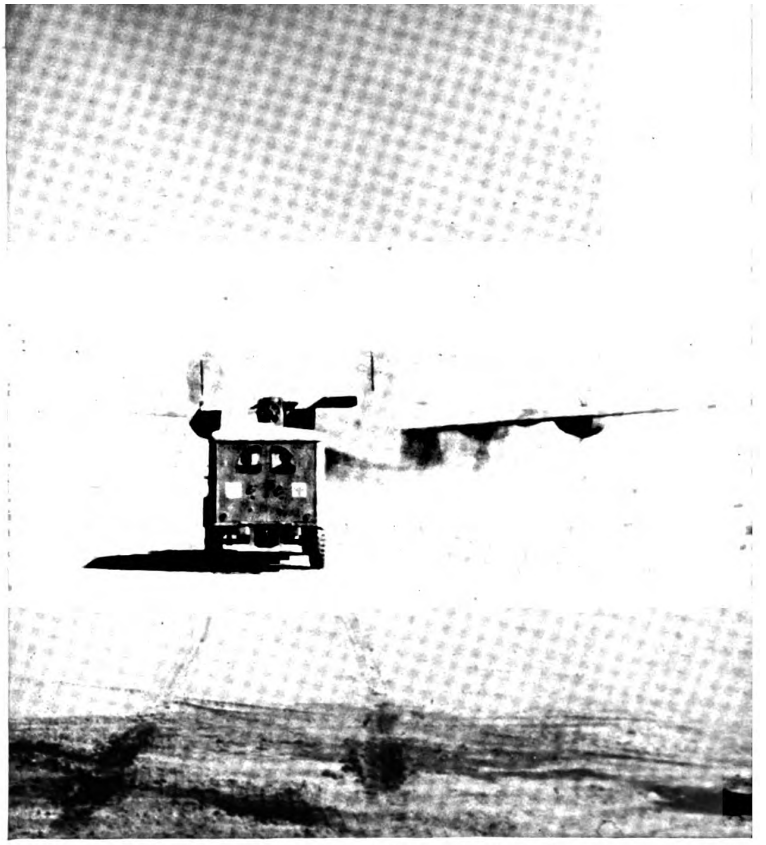
hospital with all possible speed.

Upon leaving the plane, the crew is driven by truck to headquarters for a period of interrogation. First there is roll call to account for the injured or missing. Then questions are asked, mostly of the navigators and bombardiers, but all members of the crew chip in with whatever they observed or experienced which may be of value in tallying up the score. The questions cover the time the target was reached, the time the bombers left it to return, the number and size of bombs dropped over the target, whether or not direct hits were observed, and every other relevant fact. Meanwhile, any photographs taken during the raid are prepared for a later inspection by all who participated in the mission. After the available information has been pieced together by G2 Intelligence, the story becomes fairly clear of what was accomplished, how well, and what it cost both us and the enemy.

Upon return to my tent that night, I too felt emotionally exhausted, even though mine was but an infinitesimal part spent in the exciting activities of the day. I wondered about the state of mind of the men who had done so much more. It is my own observation that the average American soldier can bounce back quickly, solidly, and truly into his best fighting trim. Anyone can readily imagine the enervating effect that a dangerous bombing mission must have on the nervous system. Even though a safe return to base is accomplished, the ensuing letdown is caustic. Yet Bill Dawley told me that two such sorties within 24 hours had been made by several crews.

As usual, everything in the tent was covered, inches thick, with dust and sand—more like a century's accumulation than that of a few hours.

A note from Dutch saddened me. The medicos thought the pain in his side was appendicitis and they had shipped him over to the hospital tent. Would I come and see him before my remaining stay of two days had elapsed? The other visitor brought solace. It was a wiggling bit of mutt dog I had often seen begging scraps around camp. He and Dutch had adopted each other and now he was a forlorn little creature seeking companionship. He had singled out my tent and,



AMBULANCE RACES TO ANSWER LIB FLARE SIGNAL, "WOUNDED ABOARD"

until my arrival, had been snoozing peacefully on my sand-covered cot. I had just received my weekly rations, including a chocolate bar which I shared with my irresistible and grateful guest. His scrubby tail wagged faster than ever. Then he curled up in a corner and went to sleep, and I soon followed suit under my sandy blankets. Of the two of us, it could truly be said that I was the more dog-tired.

Next morning General Ent and his staff held a breakfast conference, reviewing the last mission and laying preliminary plans for the next. The General and his Chief of Staff, together with the Operational Staff, determine the number of bombs and the range of a mission. The intelligence staff acquires all possible information pertaining to the target, the number of fighter planes that may be encountered, the number and location of ground antiaircraft installations, and the most practical routes to and from the target. Then maintenance, under Colonel Nero, steps in to provide the planes, the engines, the spare parts, and so on. It's all so easy to say or write, but there are a million and one details that must

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Sgt. Lewis M. Shields and T/Sgt. Chas. J. Cammock check damage to "Daisy Mae's" tail turret. Sturdy Liberators return in spite of huge flak holes like this.



be thought of and accounted for, and it goes on, night and day, wherever American planes are in action.

When heavy fire from enemy fighters and ack-ack are anticipated, it is best to use as many bombers at one time as possible. Ten planes over the target at once is a safer bet than one plane over it ten times, for the enemy always uses his maximum antiaircraft and aerial fighter resistance regardless of whether one or a hundred of our ships are making the attack.

One rule that many pilots find hard to put into practice—as who would not—is that of flying a straight course through the zone of fire surrounding the target. Even though a zigzag course would seem to yield greater safety, actually it means remaining within the fire zone much longer than when the straight course is followed; and, as the CG said, "You never know when to zig or when to zag." The primary idea is to go directly to the target, drop your bombs as accurately as possible, then turn directly out of the zone of fire, and "git fer home."

Later that morning I went out to the airfield to inspect the planes that had returned from the raid. Some of them were pretty well riddled. Tail gunner Sgt. Nick Hunt of Las Animas, Colo., and two mechanics were examining the glass in the tail turret of their plane, the "Daisy Mae." It had been hit with a 20-mm. explosive shell. Beyond doubt, the bulletproof glass had saved Nick from a disastrous fate.

"While we were over the target," he said, "a German ME-109 came up from below and started to shoot straight at me. When that shell hit the glass, I thought surely I was gone. The explosion alone was terrifying, but I fired the rest of my shells and I

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finally got that so-and-so Messerschmitt." He saw me looking at his bandaged hand. "Aw," he said, "that's nothing—just a little bruise I got from a shell fragment."

Another plane had a hole the size of a man's head torn through it. The top turret of a third had been thoroughly blasted. Two of the boys, looking decidedly grim, climbed up to what had been the hood over the turret gunner; they couldn't say a word—the remains of the turret were too unpleasant a sight. The lad once occupying that seat had been a friend of theirs. Men don't cry over such occurrences, but the inner wrench is all the more difficult.

Beside another plane, the "Stinger," I found the crew hoisting a wing from a cannibalized ship to replace a wing damaged by German fire. The hoist they were using was a portable German apparatus found at Tobruk, which Colonel Nero had requisitioned for his open-air repair shop.

Meanwhile, our visitors from home were gathered at the airfield in preparation for the flight to their next destination. Although I was scheduled to leave the following morning, we were heading toward different sectors, so we said our good-bys and happy landings. I had gained a new conception of what is endured by our professional entertainers in devoting all such talent as they have to the pleasure-famished soldier. Larry Adler had said, "We all have to do those things we can do best and where they are most needed."

Routine at the base, so pleasantly and so briefly interrupted by their visit, now resumed its workaday guise. Many of the gunners busied themselves in cleaning their guns, a chore they must do regularly following each mission. Every man is made person-

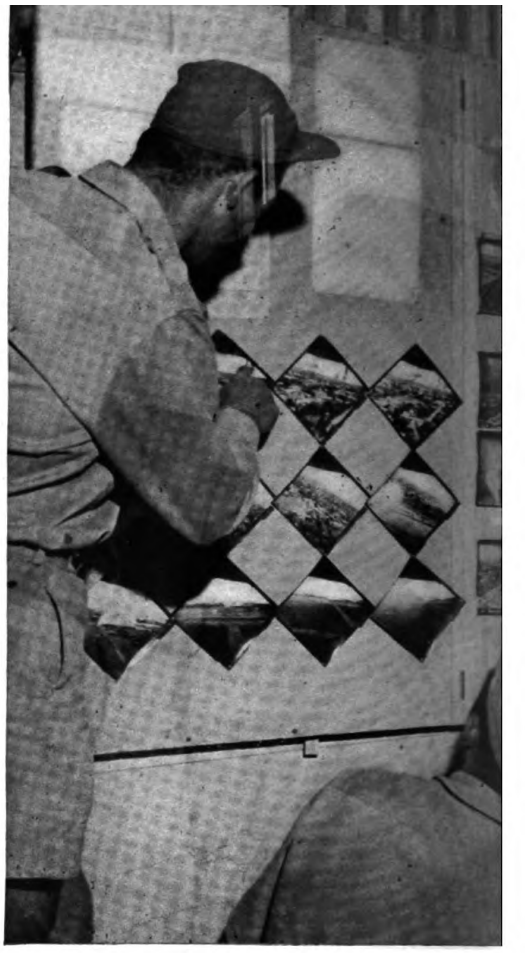


"Mafeesh" for gunner who occupied this turret, a grim reminder of victory's cost. (*below*) "Lucky" crew members examine flak hole from which fire raged.



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What happened when American planes bombed the Ploesti oil refineries is shown in these two official AAF photographs, which provide information concerning success of mission. Some are placed on bulletin board (*above*) for the crews' study and comment.



ally responsible for his weapons and for keeping them in working order. One pilot explained, "Once, when we had been flying toward the target for about half an hour, my tail gunner came forward to report that his gun was out of order. He expected me to turn the ship back to the base, but I had to say, 'You go back and sit there and watch the fighter ships. We are not turning back.' We never had any trouble with our guns after that."

I wish I could say that my last day in camp wound up in a blaze of glory, but such was not the case. I was guilty of unpardonable carelessness and only an undeservedly kind fate prevented dis-

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→ **Bombing of Palermo** (AAF official photograph). See pages 174-177 for close-up views.

aster. With spirits unusually high — each completed assignment meant one day closer to wife and home, a new home which I had not even seen — I borrowed a jeep and drove around a bit frantically in fear of missing some last important picture. Attracted by half a dozen huge B-24's just taking off, I looked upwards for an instant and ran into a guy wire holding a field radio pole. The wire snapped, the pole crashed to the ground, and I jammed on the brakes. Fortunately for me, the mission had been safely under way and no serious calamity had befallen it.

Colonel Nero laughed when I apologized for the accident. He

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As patient leaves field hospital with tottering gait for spot of morning sunshine, nurse and friends encourage his recovery.

While he lies in field hospital tent, wounded bombardier Gioana receives a cheering visit from his crew mates and their mascot.

said that it was far better to hit a guy wire on the ground with a jeep than to pilot a plane into the reinforced-concrete telephone poles installed by the Italians in this area. That's what the "Kickapoo" did the morning of the take-off for the Ploesti raid. The ship developed engine trouble right after take-off, and in attempting a crash landing, it hit one of the massive telephone poles and ripped off a wing. The bomber burst into flames and crashed. All but two members of the crew — 2nd Lieut. Russell Polivka, navigator from Wisconsin, and Staff Sgt. Eugene Garner, tunnel turret gunner of Texas — were fatally burned.



That afternoon I visited the field hospital aiding one unit of the IXth Bomber Command. It was situated in a little pine forest quite a distance from the center of operations. Despite the effort of the trees to look fresh and green, they, too, were covered with the red-brown dust of the desert. The tents had been screened with mosquito netting, and the tent bases were well

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sandbagged to keep the wind from blowing dirt and sand under the flaps.

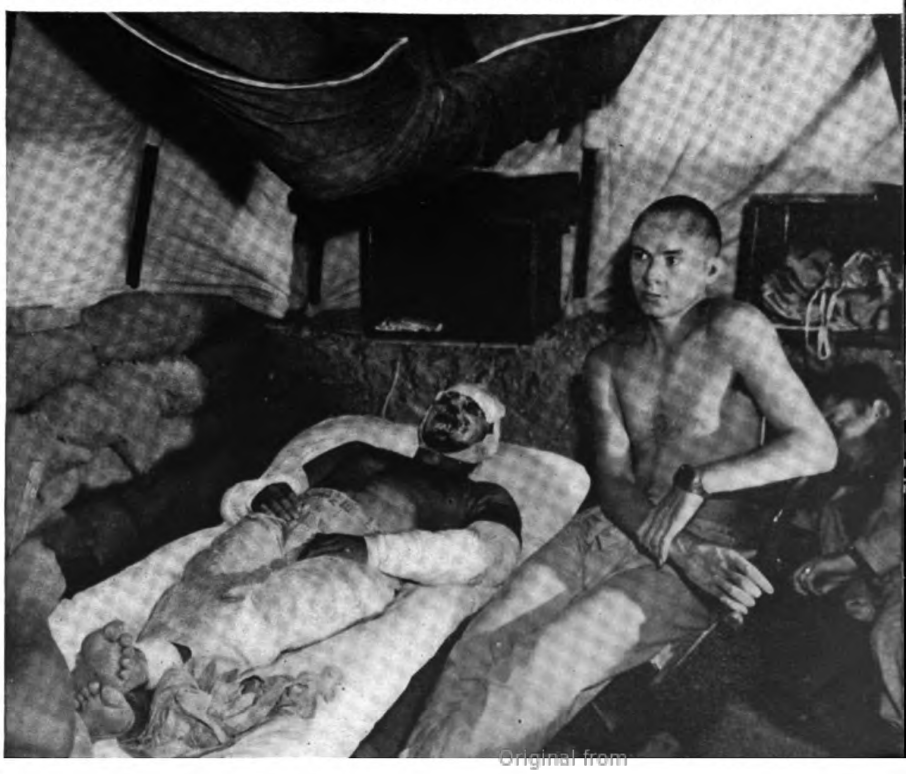
Here, supine on a fresh, white cot, was Dutch, grinning from ear to ear and not in the least worried about a forthcoming bout with the knife. It definitely was appendicitis, he said, and they were going to send him to Cairo by plane for the operation. He was eagerly anticipating the change of scenery. When he heard I was leaving the next day, he said he'd see me before I got away, but this I doubted. I was going into Bengasi that night and told him so, but he insisted he'd make it somehow.

Gathered about another cot were members of a bomber crew on a visit to one of their number who had been seriously wounded, 2nd Lieut. Guido Gioana, bombardier, from San Francisco. The doctors had counted twenty-five flak wounds in his side, and his leg had been almost completely perforated. Now his friends were here to chaff him into a happier frame of mind. The buffoonery dealt mostly with the carelessness of the wounded lad in not getting out of the way of a German bullet. One man pointed out that if he had been smart and dodged, as had the rest of them, he wouldn't have been hit. On the surface, the conversation held nothing much worth repeating, but underneath it was their method of telling a pal that they were sorry and would miss him very much. The wounded boy held up his end of the play in good spirit and reminded them that he would be having a hamburger sandwich and a sundae as soon as he arrived back in the states—and he'd think of them then.

I had a letter from Gioana some months later. He said he was in a Florida hospital, was getting along



Nurse enters through double mosquito netting entrance to attend her patient. *(below)* "Kickapoo" survivors, Navigator Polivka and Tunnel Gunner Garner.



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↑ **Locations of Nazi bullet** and flak holes offer subject for some serious speculation—"If it had been three inches higher. . . ."



Lt. Bob Patterson, arm mending, sits on front stoop with fine view of Nazi rubble. *(below)* They'll soon have that flak hole patched.



fine, and would drop in to see me some day soon.

The nurses and Red Cross workers around the hospital were cheerful and immaculate in khaki or blue cotton dresses.

Theirs was also a difficult task. It's not without great perseverance that they maintain the degree of sanitation necessary for hospitalized men when thermometers threaten to boil over, when sand and dust blow continuously, when there are malevolent forms of insect and bacterial life clamoring for human tissue, when the water supply never is quite adequate, and when there are so many other factors, nonexistent in a big, modern hospital, with which to contend. Nevertheless, the nurses and doctors contrived amazingly well to give their patients all the essential hygienic care necessary until their withdrawal to a more permanent and feasible establishment.

Three crew members of the Liberator "Chug-a-lug" were also in hospital, but were expecting to be evacuated soon. The "Chug-a-lug" had been in the Middle East area for about a year and had survived fifty-five missions. The present crew had worked as a unit on the ship for nearly 10 months without suffering a casualty. During the last, less fortunate raid the bomber had run into enemy fire when still some 12 minutes from the target. The flak was exceptionally thick, but the "Chug-a-lug" had plowed through to drop its bombs. However, immediately following bombs-away a 37-mm. shell struck from the left, blasting the top turret and the nose of the plane. Another shell exploded in the face of the waist gunner. Luck most certainly was with him, for most of the flak spent itself on the ammunition cans, but some got him in the arm and hand. His encounter with death had been very close indeed and he frankly admitted that he had been a badly frightened gunner.

Again, the raid had been flown at low level. The "Chug-a-lug," after leaving the target, had dusted the tops of a train of flat cars. The other waist gunner, while striving to knock out the machine guns mounted on the flat cars, was hit in the face. The bomber and its crew not only took the blast from enemy fire, but ran into other obstacles as well. The thick smoke screened from

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Bomber surgeon. Colonel Nero (right) huddles with maintenance crew chief on repair of this wounded and crash-landed Lib.

Probing smashed ailerons. After each raid, desert mechanics immediately examine extent of damage suffered by returned bombers.



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↑ **Open-air workshop.** Sheet Duralumin, portable workbench, handmade jigs plus ingenuity quickly restore wrecked planes.

→ **Over conference table** contrived of bomb fin casing, sit maintenance chief and group officers, designating planes for next mission.

their sight a barrage balloon, which, before they could swerve, they struck with a glancing blow, snapping the cable with the wing-tip outside Number 4 engine. They were flying so low they tangled with a tree, but managed to pull the ship upward and continue toward home.

Trouble continued to dog them, however. Pursuit ships were now on their tail, one of which went down in flames, as the result of some accurate shooting by the "Chug-a-lug's" tail gunner. But in the process, he had his boot shot off and received a slight injury. An enemy 88-mm. gun scored a hit in the right vertical stabilizer, leaving a hole 2 feet in diameter. On the trip home the aileron and stabilizer were locked in a down position, forcing "over-control" of the ship to keep it flying on even keel. The hydraulic system, radio, electrical instruments, and oxygen lines were out of condition, and a strong vibration developed throughout the plane. Somehow, with all her injuries, the Lib brought them safely home.

None of their injuries was severe or dangerous, but the boys would be out of action for some time, and this worried them far more than did their own damage.

Back at the base I found Colonel Nero at his never ending job of checking up on damaged planes.

He believed the enemy exacted a greater degree of discipline than we do. When a German officer passes an enlisted man, there is much ado in fixing bayonets, clicking heels, and so on. "But the results are what count," said the Colonel. "We seem to be more efficient. There's no question but that we are superior in maintenance.

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Patches, rivets, and paint will repair Nazi damage to American star. If other parts are needed, cannibalized "Battle Ax" in background can provide them.



We can change four engines between missions—24 hours—and with but six men to an engine; have done so many times. Previous to our present supply of planes, conditions really were trying. Many times we were compelled to pull the motors off some planes in order to service others, but those days are gone forever."

Several of us that evening went to Bengasi to attend the opening of the new Red Cross Enlisted Men's Club. We found about a thousand men at the gathering. The announcement of the party, which was to include dancing, had spread far and wide. Some of the men had hitchhiked as much as 15 miles to get there. I met one group that came from New York City, and they were as much excited and thrilled as I was to meet someone from our home town.

There were perhaps only eighteen girls. Only? This was a huge number, more than they had seen for a very long while.

The new club filled a long-felt want, for many of the men hadn't known what to do in their spare time.

Sandwiches, doughnuts, and lemonade were served as refreshments. In outline on the wall was a huge map of the United States. Everyone was invited to sign his name within the boundaries of his native state.

It was very late when I approached camp that night and I still had my packing to do, and an early rising hour facing me in the morning. I was surprised to see the faint light of a candle shining from inside my tent and wondered who could be making himself at home in my canvas shelter. As I might have guessed, it was Dutch,*

* *Dutch: We hesitated to identify you—you symbolized so many other men and so much. But we think your friends would like to know that you are Private Edward J. Helwig of Ridgewood, N. Y.*

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Be it ever so humble . . . Dmitri's 90-pound home and studio for two weeks on the desert, where notes were written and films changed.

Chemicals smother flames of crashed Beau-fighter. (*below*) Damaged yesterday; tomorrow she'll be on the milk run.





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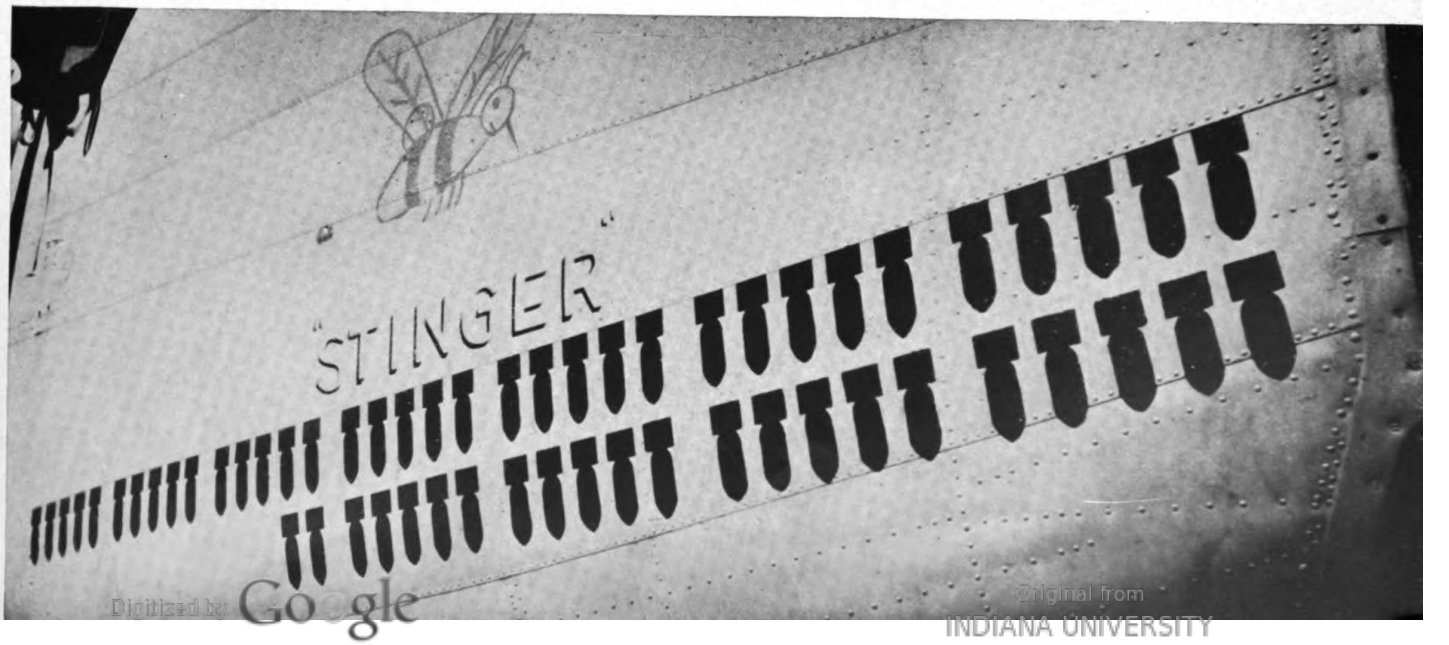


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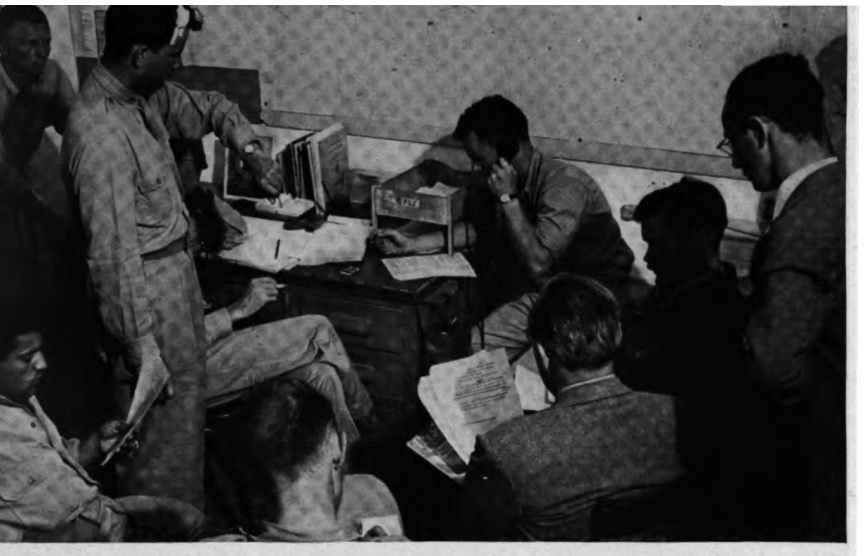


← **Bombers' names** are selected by crews. Here, T/Sgt. Arthur J. Marsh and S/Sgt. Charles Cavage spruce up "The Little Gramper."

↑ **A real live pin-up girl** from Broadway. Surrounded by horde of "eager beavers," Birdie Dean, USO, poses for inspired bomber artist.



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Capt. George Kirksey and men assist in broadcast from desert to America. Jack Benny with script, Larry Adler at extreme right, Major Brooks at phone.





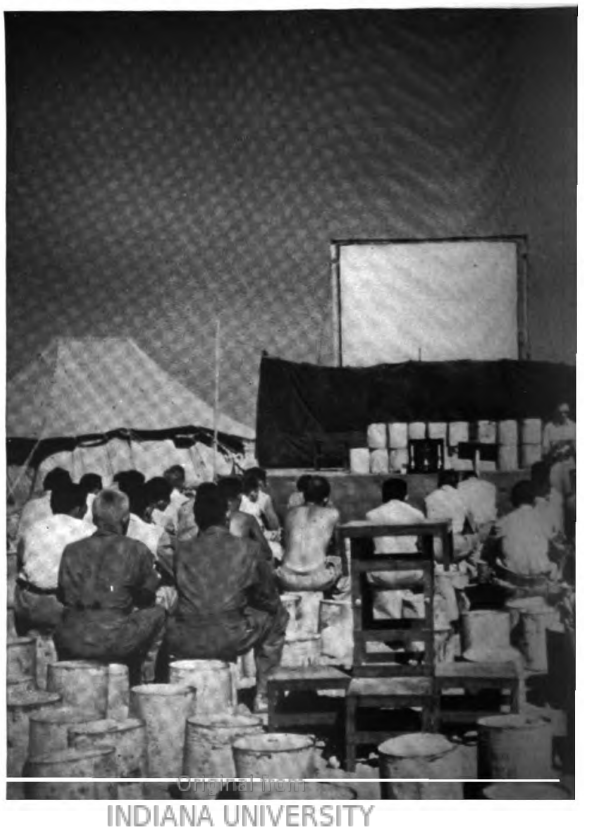
At Bengasi Red Cross Club visitors autograph native states. (*right*) Officers at HQ Club greet USO guest. (*below*) In captured Nazi tent—cards and ping-pong.



AWOL from hospital, and waiting for a last visit. He helped me pack, and after I had turned in, he continued to sit on the edge of the bunk, reluctant to leave. I understood: states, home, family — all this was what I represented to him. Finally he blew out the candle, said good night, and went out into the desert.

After he had left, I lay there a long while in the dark, sleepless, when a strange realization came to me. Contrary to all reason, I was going to miss this canvas shelter. I had been lonely in it, exhausted, dirty, and often disgusted in it. Its comforts were almost nonexistent and, such as they were, primitive. My only visitors had been Dutch and a lonely mutt dog. Almost none of the things that civilized man finds necessary to his existence had entered. I was more than eager to return home to loved ones and to comforts; still, there was one little tug of restraint. Perhaps it was the primitive in me bidding farewell to a natural

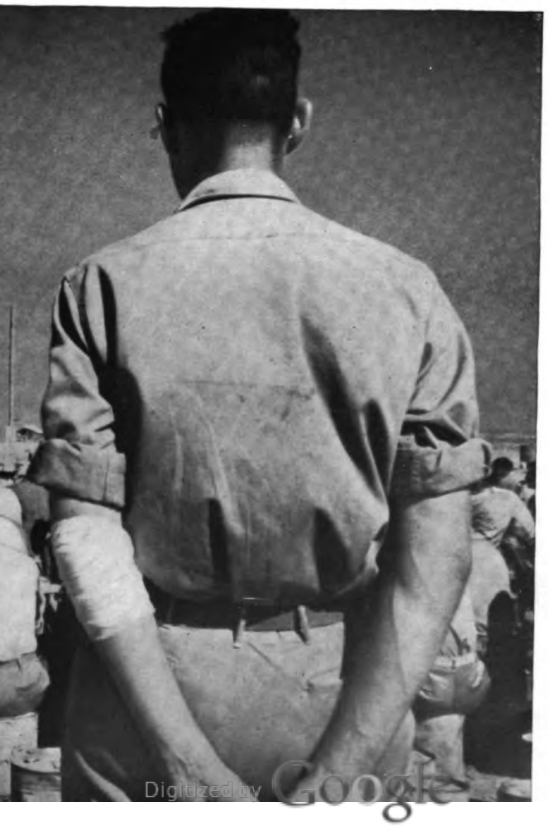
Church services, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, are held every Sunday for all who wish to attend.

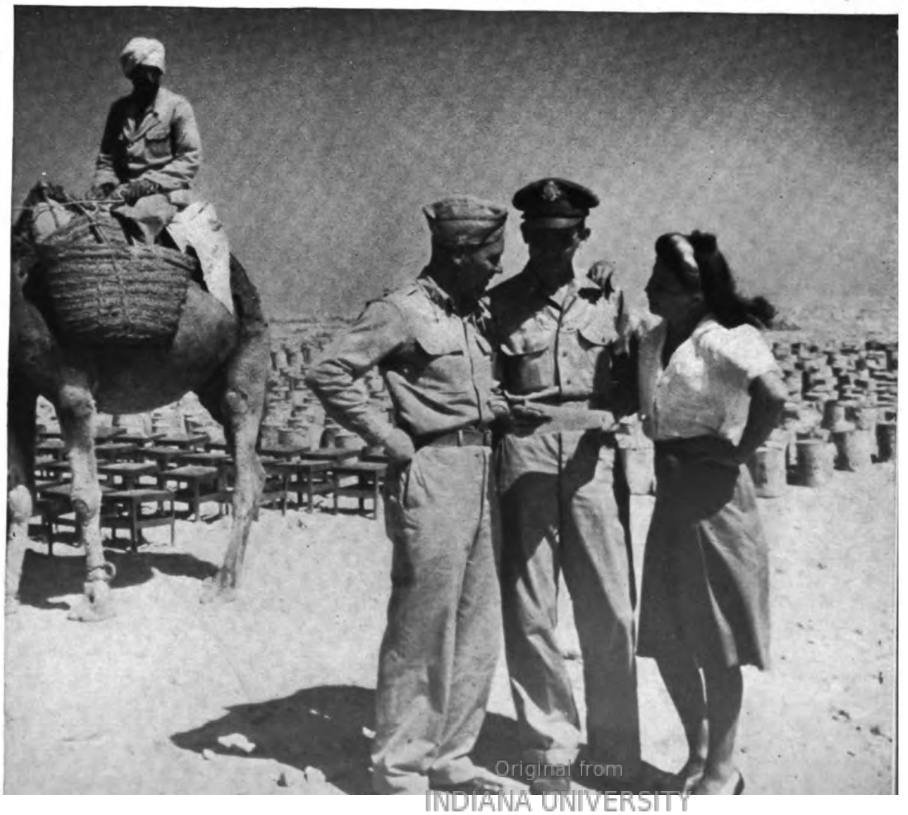


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↑ **"Libyan Palm Room."** Within shelter of palm-leaf and burlap, USO guest and officers read or just relax in this mid-desert officers' club. Col. Nero (2nd from right) confers with Col. Compton. (*below*) Plans for evening show. Arab hopes for grape concession.





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Cares forgotten until tomorrow. Jack Benny and Wini Shaw join GI's at gathering after evening's open-air performance. Man at Wini's right must be married. (*below*) Lt. Col. John Bruce Logie puts a jeep's rear-view mirror to practical front-view use.



environment. Whatever it was, it made me feel a little less sad for the men who were staying. At the same time, I was amused by this conclusion, for not a man there but would have given everything he had to be in my boots.

Thoughts of the men and boys I had met kept passing through my head—the faces of some of those I had photographed, who hadn't come back; the messages that many had given me for their friends back home; the Liberator that Jack Benny had christened, and which, heaven help it, would be known henceforth and forever as the

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"Bucksheesh Benny Rides Again;" Bill Dawley, dry-cleaning his clothes with 100-octane gasoline mulcted from a plane; all these, and many more impressions returned to file themselves away in unforgettable pattern. The dusty miles of walking from tent to mess to headquarters to airfield, and back to tent, and out for water — most of the terminals were separated by as much as a mile or two.

I recalled my initial contact with a "desert lily." Spying a convenient five-gallon can resting on the sand some distance from my tent, and thinking to adapt it to my own use as a water container, I had trudged out and was almost upon my quarry before I noticed other cans not too approximate to the tents but dispersed at precise intervals between them. It was then I realized how close I had been to misemploying the camp's system of sanitation.

I was sleeping soundly when, too soon, it was 6:30 and one of the boys was there to waken me. He waited in a jeep for me to finish dressing, then rushed me to breakfast which I finished "on the tire," and we were off to Benina where I was to catch my plane to Tripoli.

As the ship was being readied for take-off — I would have been aboard in another two minutes — a jeep and a cloud of dust came tearing down the road to the airport. The jeep stopped, and the dust cloud was upon me when out of it, much to my pleasant surprise, stepped Colonel Nero. He had driven across the 20 miles of desert from Bengasi to say good-by.

There was a last-minute handshake, a quick wave through the window as the plane rolled down the runway, and so ended the Bengasi chapter of my journal. Not quite, for since then I have heard from many of the boys. A few have returned to America on leave, on furlough, or because of wounds. They have dropped into my studio to see some of the pictures that were taken in the desert and to talk about mutual experiences.

For reasons best known to Military Intelligence, it was necessary to fly to Tunis before taking plane for Sicily. So it was by long way around we flew, over coastwise towns with names forever stamped on English hearts. There was Agedabia, El Agheila, and then Sirte, all on the shore of the gulf of Sirte, all now sand-washed of the blood of free men and enemy alike.

Nearing Tripoli were the coastal highways, lined with eucalyptus trees and looking very like parts of California. During a brief stopover in the clean, attractive city, I took the opportunity to visit the 4th Field Hospital, the first of such units to have gone overseas. There were many boys from the IXth here, happy to receive the messages I brought from their group.

With a Bengasi breakfast, a Tripolitan lunch, and dinner at Tunis, I was reminded of Jack Benny who had said: "Breakfast in Accra, dinner at Khartoum, and dysentery at Cairo."

We flew over the onetime Mareth line and on up the coast toward Sfax. The pilot pointed out the tracks of Rommel's retreat winding through the olive trees and continuing for a distance of 200 miles along the shoreline. Then on toward Sousse, with the light so perfect that I had to take pictures. Meanwhile, the copilot took the controls and the pilot, who before the war had been leader of an orchestra, let go on a trumpet with some very hot and very wonderful jazz and we

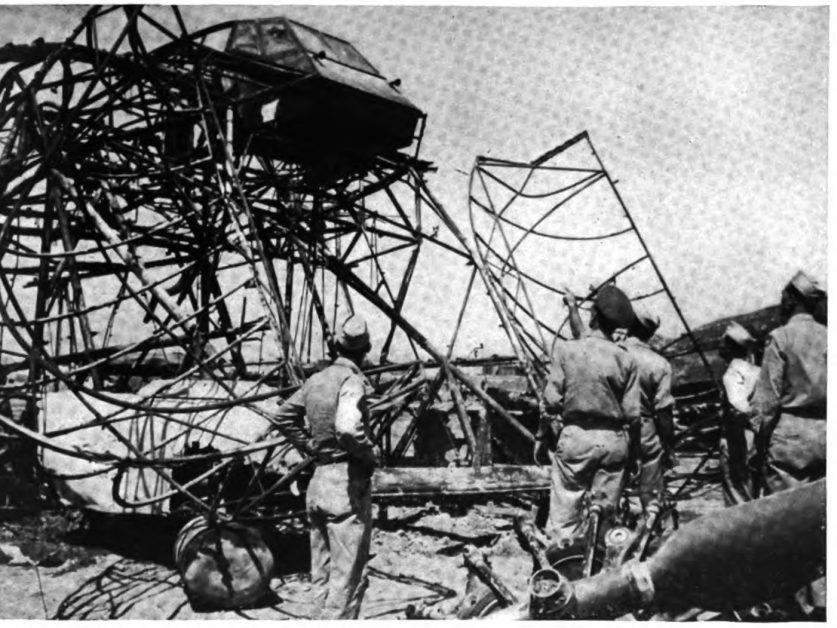
Cape Bon, end of the road for Hitler "Heilers." Along this Tunisian coastline the allies drove retreating Axis armies to Nazi Dunkerque in the Mediterranean.



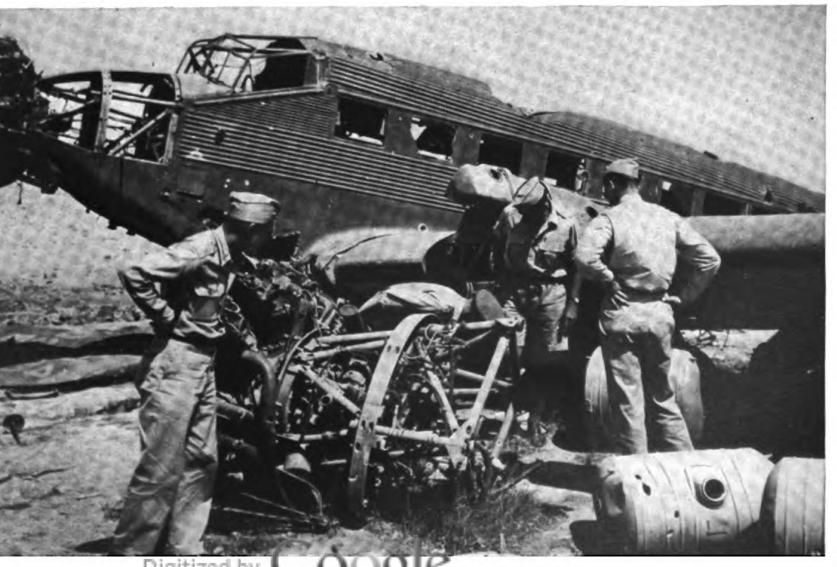
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TUNIS. ATC MOVES IN ON ARMY'S HEELS, SETS UP HEADQUARTERS IN WRECKED BUILDINGS



EL AOUINA AIRPORT, TUNIS, HAD TO BE CLEARED OF THIS TWISTED AXIS WRECKAGE



entered Tunis "right on the beam."

Upon landing at El Aouina Airport I was somewhat startled by the tattered and torn appearance of the buildings on the field. Great gaping holes invited the winds, ever present around an airport, to whistle freely in every direction. The bombs had left almost nothing undemolished. Nevertheless, the remaining shreds of buildings were occupied and being repaired as quickly as the lack of wherewithal would permit.

Tunis, North Africa

The Tunis airport was a busy place with travelers of all nationalities passing through. ATC had set up sleeping accommodations for a few, but the open country would have afforded almost as much protection. It was part of the duties of Capt. Frank Wetzel, Jr., CO, and Lieut. Bruce Cabot, Operations Officer, to guide and advise these migrants, many of whom were unfamiliar with the requirements of wartime traveling.

Captain Wetzel told me that ATC had just inaugurated its service to Sicily. Among the first large shipments to be transported to the newly liberated section of the island were 25,000 pounds of American invasion currency, addressed to the Finance Office of the 7th Army.

After accompanying me to a crude snack bar in a ramshackle building, where I indulged myself with a Spam sandwich and warm lemonade, Lieutenant Cabot conducted me in a jeep on a tour of the ruins.

Piled near the airport were great masses of wreckage, some of which consisted of numerous German and Italian planes. A few giant-size metal frames had once been Nazi six-engined

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ITALIAN PRISONERS ON KP. LIEUT. CABOT INVITES RAF OFFICERS FOR SPOT OF TEA IN KITCHEN MESS. *(BELOW)* QUICK SHAVE BETWEEN PLANE HOPS

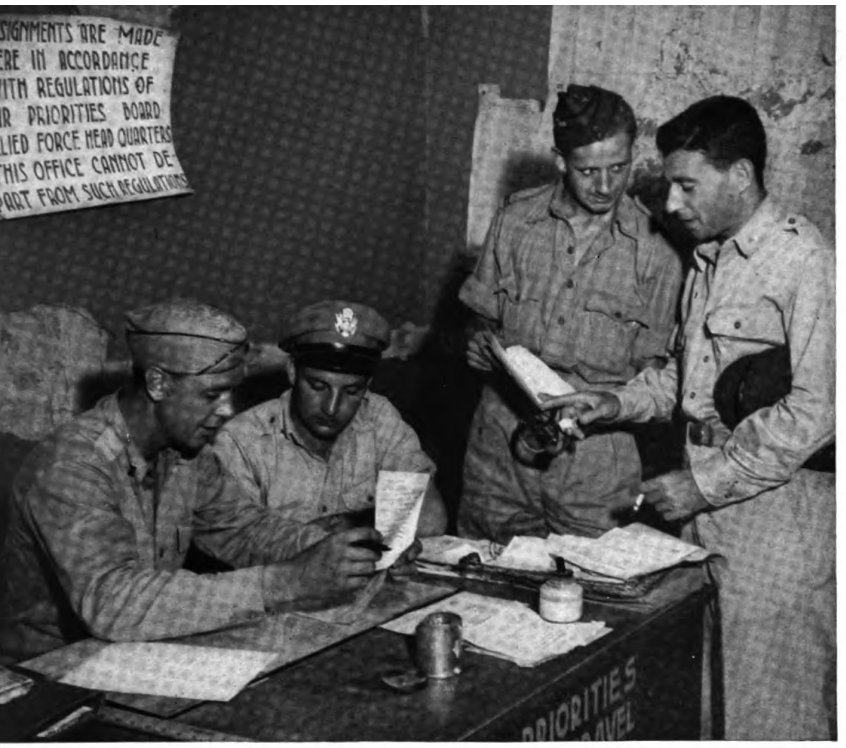
transports, designed to carry not only a great number of men but a huge tank and jeep as well.

Lieutenant Cabot told me that on the previous night the Germans had twice raided Bizerte, 28 miles away. The barrage of antiaircraft which had been sent up and the flares from the bomb explosions had been seen all the way from Tunis. There had been about 100 German and Italian planes in the raid, which took 110 lives and wreaked damage on some shipping in the harbor. Now Tunis was wondering if it was to be their turn next.

Willing and good-humored Italian prisoners had been assigned to KP duty at the officers' mess at the airport. Their attempts to speak English afforded much laughter, even among themselves. They were nice-looking lads and, except for a proneness to salute us playfully on the slightest occasion and their refusal to believe



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AT TUNIS, ATC VALIDATES TRANSPORTATION TO "THE FRONT" ON PRIORITY BASIS

that Palermo had fallen to the Allies, had traits not too unlike our own men. Not so the German prisoners; sullen, obstinate, and dangerous in their constant attempts at sabotage, they only too clearly evidenced a propensity to think themselves members of a super-race.

LIEUT. MILLER *(RIGHT)* ESTABLISHES ATC PALERMO BASE IN FORMER ITALIAN AIR TERMINAL



One of the Italian prisoners, a former mechanic who had proved to be an excellent cook when put on KP duty, disappeared one day and everyone thought he had effected an escape. But in three days he returned in company with an Italian soldier who had been hiding out for weeks and whom he introduced as his brother. "He good cook, too," explained the returned prisoner, whereupon both went to work.

After an early morning swim with Lieutenant Cabot off the pier in the Bay of Tunis, I boarded my plane for Sicily along with twenty-six other passengers. It was a mixed crowd, including two British officers on their way to the 8th Army; Maj. James H. Quello (Detroit, Michigan) of the 7th Army and various Army and Navy lads, some of whom had become lost from their units; others, having recovered from wounds, were heading back to the front. We flew above the island of Pantelleria, which had been forced to surrender by pressure of air forces alone, and dropped down on the airstrip at Ponte Olivo, on the southern coast of Sicily, for refueling and lunch. Here we were delighted to receive fresh doughnuts, "just brought over from Africa by a pretty Red Cross girl," said a mess sergeant.

Palermo, Sicily

Off again, a quick stop at Agrigento, and then directly north to Palermo from which the Germans had departed so recently that our own military and civil government forces had yet scarcely set up their respective organizations.

In spite of wreckage, poverty, and suffering, the majority of civilians in that city of 370,000 were thankful for

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VIA BUCKET SEAT TO PALERMO, SICILY, ARMY AND NAVY PERSONNEL WITH GUNS, LUGGAGE, AND SUPPLIES HEAD FOR FRONT LINE ASSIGNMENTS

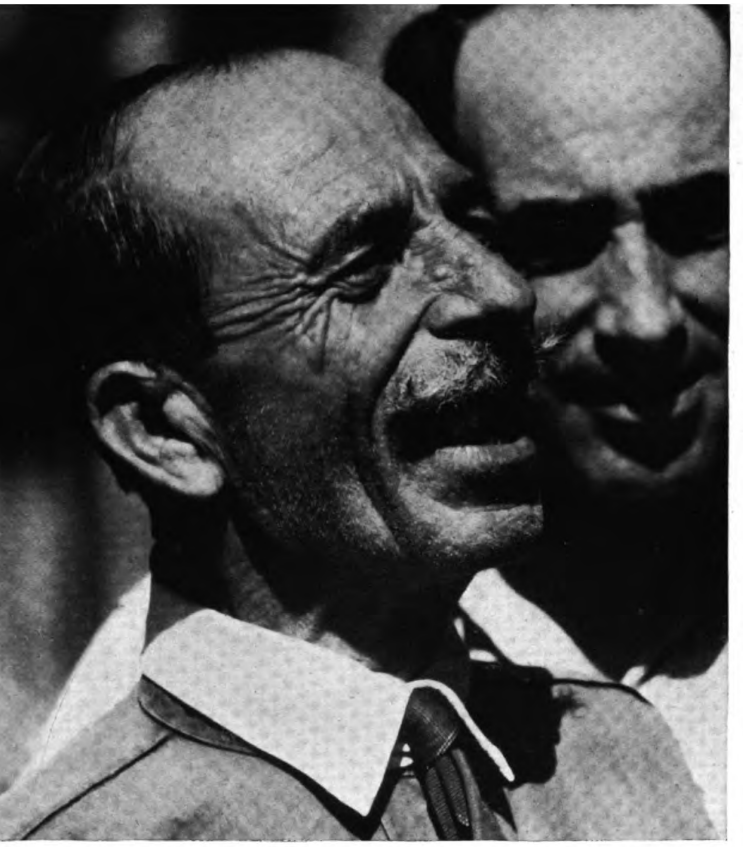
the arrival of the American and British Armies.

Our planes, of course, had been bombing Palermo for months. Much of it was little more than pulverized brick and mortar. Not a little of the damage had been wreaked by the four-motored Liberators and my friends of the IXth Bomber Command. Yet, as Americans entered the half-ruined city on the heels of the retreating Germans, there were smiles of undeniable relief and welcome on the faces of these war-ravaged Sicilians. But also there were pain, horror, hunger, and fear. Women and children, particu-

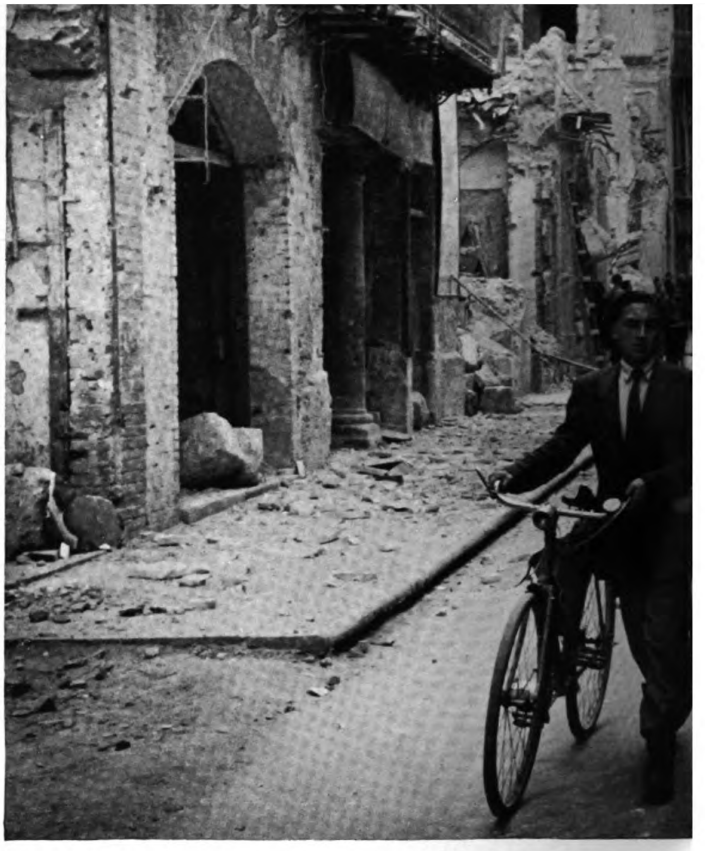
AMERICAN FIGHTER SHIPS AND ATC TRANSPORTS LINE RUNWAYS OF PALERMO'S AIRPORT. MONTE PELLEGRINO, NOTED LANDMARK, FORMS BACKDROP



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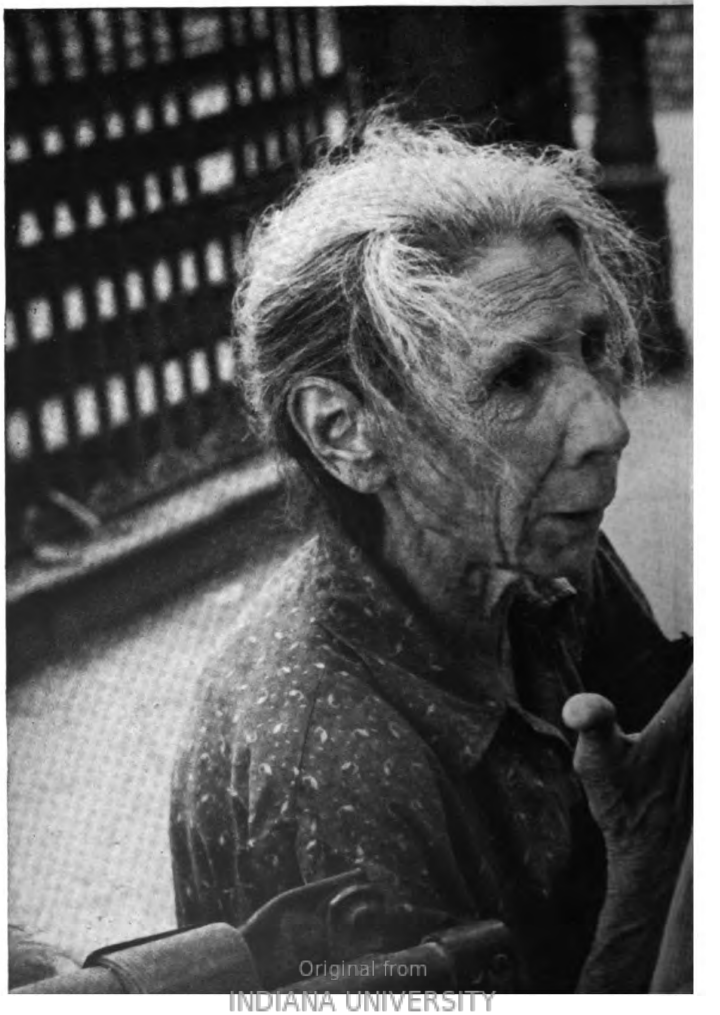


Despite aerial smashing of Palermo by American bombs, there were smiles of welcome for our boys and relief that Nazis had left.



The 7th Army wheels into the ravaged and littered streets. Now American, not German, jeeps and motorized vehicles are on patrol.





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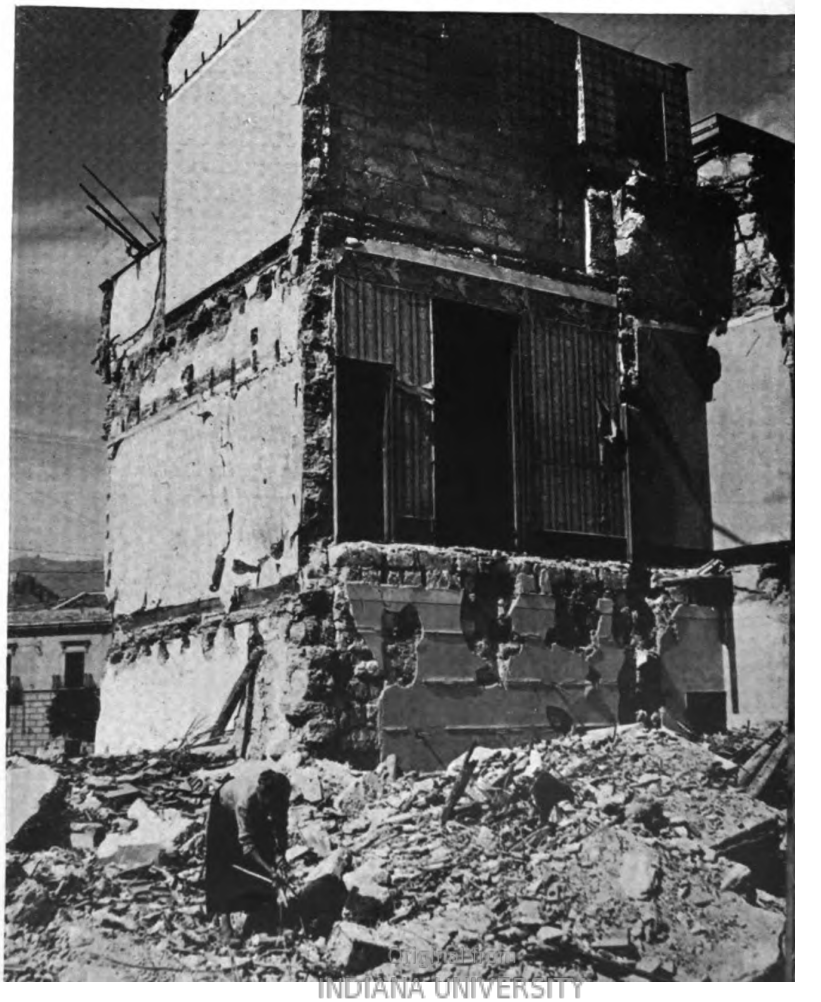


War leaves its indelible scars on youth and age. Half-fearful, yet hopeful, this aged Sicilian pleads with GI for needed food.



Engineer and Signal Corps work fast in establishing communications. (*below*) Once a home, now pulverized brick and mortar.





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Via Francesco Crispi, once avenue of homes and shops, now sacrificed to war. Anxious faces, one bruised by shell fragment, reveal four years of suffering.



➔ **PFC's** Bill Tucker (Md.), Al Vanderhoff (Pa.), and Lelon Moore (Ga.) spot unexploded bomb.

larly, were undernourished, the Nazis having looted everything of real value from shops, stores, and public buildings.

Lieut. Earl Miller, of Maryland, an officer with ATC, was to be my guide and counselor, on and off, for the next few days. In the former Italian Airlines building at the airport, I found him busy patching together an office with but one hammer, one miter saw, and some second-hand nails. Four Italian prisoners were furnishing the labor under his direction. Each morning the prisoners were called for at their billets, driven to work in a trailer attached to a jeep, and after finishing their work at four in the afternoon, were returned in like fashion.

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CHOW LINES FOR HUNGRY 7TH ARMY GI'S WERE FORMED ON STREETS UPON ARRIVAL IN PALERMO; REGULAR MESS QUARTERS WERE ESTABLISHED LATER

My quarters were to be in the Il Grande Albergo Sole on Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Here Ernie Pyle, Jack Belden of *Time*, and other correspondents were temporarily resting from front-line assignments.

The German Embassy, an impressive building, was being used for Officers' Mess. Major Quello, whom I had met on the plane to Palermo, had dinner with me there that night and a very excellent one it was. Here, too, we received our weekly ration of cigarettes, gum, and hard candy —a tremendous treat in war zones and always received with the gratification of a youngster poking into a Christmas stocking.

PRISONERS, TOO, PERFORM CHORES AND ARE FED THE SAME C-RATIONS AS OUR ARMY



Many of our supply ships with military and civilian commodities were already in the harbor. Huge Army trucks were clearing away the worst of the debris. Military Police were everywhere on guard for the safety of civilians and soldiers alike. Ration books had been issued, and food and other items were being distributed. Wrecked communications called for quick replacement; unsafe buildings had to be

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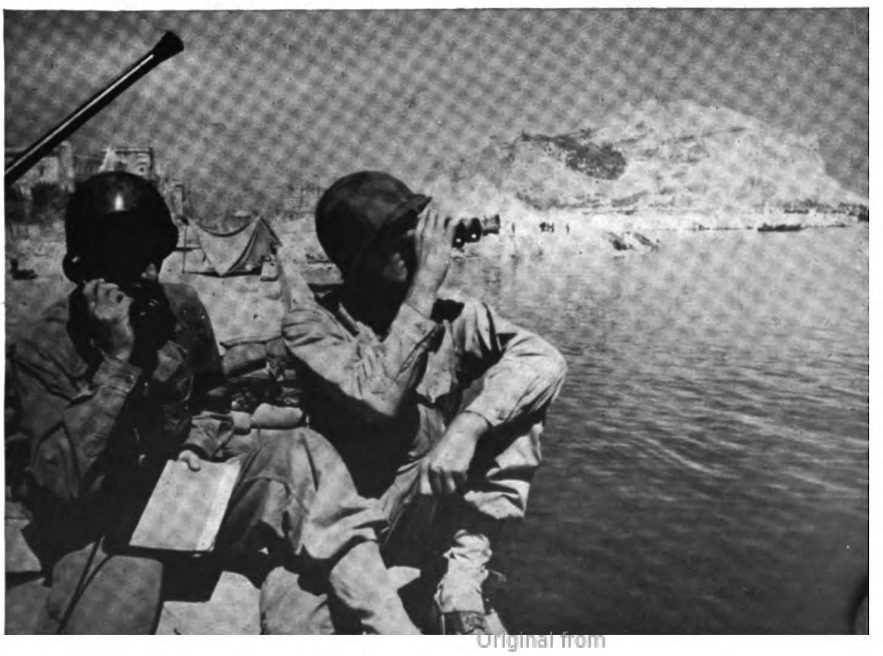
SUPPLY LINES MUST MOVE ALONG WITH ADVANCING ARMIES. TONS OF FOOD AND MUNITIONS ARE UNLOADED AT CITY'S DOCKS WITH AID OF WAR PRISONERS

condemned and pulled down; under the rubble there still were victims of the last Allied onslaught, a pitiful circumstance which only accentuated the need for fast and efficient work by the sanitary corps. Along the docks, Italian and German prisoners were helping to unload the vessels, while our own Army and Navy men were engaged in a hundred and one other jobs.

At mess time, the lines were formed right there on the quay, and the prisoners given the same food as that served to our men. Antiaircraft batteries had been set up on the docks, throughout the city, and up in the hills behind it, in anticipation that German bombers would return to disrupt American activities and destroy shipping.

During the American attacks, prior to victory, many of the civilians had taken to the hills for safety, but when word spread that the Nazis had left, they had returned to their homes, or what was left of them, only to be subjected again to violent bombings, this time from German planes. So,

ANTICIPATING ENEMY RAIDS, OUR ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS ARE QUICKLY SET UP INTO POSITION



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"Palermo was raided *by enemy planes early yesterday morning,"* stated the official communiqué, and these (*above*) are some of our dead. The score was 80 killed; 120 wounded. Horrified civilians (*below*) watch rescue crews dig in ruins for any survivors.



back again to the hills many of them had gone, driving their brightly painted two-wheeled carts loaded high with personal belongings.

Back at my hotel, I followed the apron-clad porter up four flights of stairs, thence along endless and narrow passages with sharp turns to right and to left, now up a few steps and down again, until we reached my cubicle, soberly called a room. I wondered then how I could ever find my way out in a hurry, should it prove necessary.

Being tired, I went to bed early, and despite lack of ventilation — there

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One of war's ghastliest duties. War prisoners gather mutilated members of dead Americans into baskets for later identification. (*below*) Hand of American soldier lies outstretched on the Italian soil which he fought and died to liberate from Fascist tyranny.



was no outside window, only a transom opening into the next room — sleep came easily. Hours later—at 4:15, I subsequently learned — a noise like a siren penetrated my dream. For a time I could not be certain whether or not I had dreamed the alert. Then—Kaa-RUMMPFF—and the entire building shook. I was awake! The roar of motors was so loud overhead that I thought the planes were aimed for my room. Again the building vibrated.

Never in my life had I dressed so quickly. But there were agonizing thoughts of the tortuous windings and narrow halls to be followed before I

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GRIM-VISAGED AT THE THOUGHT OF LOST COMRADES AND SUFFERING FROM SHOCK, THESE NAVY LADS SURVIVED ENEMY STRAFING DURING NIGHT'S RAID

should escape the building. I probed for the small flashlight kept handy in my bag, but, when I found it, it refused to work. I stumbled and tripped and, with amazing luck, found my way to the main stairs and groped down, still in the blackness. In the little lobby, I could just distinguish a few Italians, quaking and frenzied. I chose what I thought would be a safe place, under an arch, and sat down on the floor. An Italian squatted beside me and we each took a cigarette. As I guardedly struck my lighter, another bomb came, and it was close. "My first raid," I admitted to excuse my trembling hand. Plaster fell on us from the ceiling.

"The first is no worse than the twentieth, signore. They do not improve with experience. The first one is bad because you don't know what may happen, the rest are bad because you do."

Just then there was a terrific blast — maybe a series of them, I didn't know. The old building shook as if violently nauseated, and more plaster fell.

I remember thinking ruefully of the air raid shelter. I had been warned of the lice, dirt, and stench, but at that moment I longed to be there. Although my heart beat like a trip hammer, I doubt that there was much outward evidence of my fear. I wished for an ack-ack gun—even a .22 rifle would have made me feel better than sitting like some cornered and helpless animal.

The raid lasted a lifetime of 45 minutes. Then

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came a stillness so sudden and absolute that it shocked to silence even our whispering. Confidence returned, the talk grew louder, almost hysterical, and somebody even whistled. I returned to bed and tried to sleep, but a mosquito's buzzing in my ear was so like a distant echo of the flying bombers that I decided to forget sleep and go down to the docks.

On my way, through streets permeated with fumes from the smoke-pots, I passed weary women crawling out of basements with screaming, still-frightened children. An old man, bent with years, stumbled into me and went on, muttering. A jeepful of MP's clattered past. I met a group of ragged urchins with a box of crabs. The kids were dirty and thin, but already grown wise in one of the ways of war. They knew that bombs exploding in the bay brought dead crabs to the



THOSE UNABLE TO ANSWER THIS ROLL CALL ON MORNING AFTER RAID LIE WOUNDED ON COTS IN CROWDED HOSPITALS OR UNDER SHEETS ON STRETCHERS



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water's surface, whence they would drift shoreward to be gathered by hungry mortals. The boys were tearing off the claws and eating the crabs raw.

While the primary target had been docks and shipping, parts of the city had likewise suffered from the shattering blows of the bombs. It was not a big raid as raids go—unequal to those of Berlin, of Stuttgart, or of Strasbourg, Rotterdam, London, or Coventry. But, even though it was of a lesser degree, through the newly rubbled streets there was the same stark tragedy. Just as in London, bewildered and dazed citizens prowled and dug hopelessly in the debris of their homes. Just as in Coventry, soldiers and prisoners with guards searched for possible survivors under heaps of stone, mortar, and plaster. Is she from Rotterdam, that woman with a half-grown daughter and a baby, sitting tragic-eyed and weary while the baby nurses? Her expression as she looks skyward at every plane roaring past, and the daughter's automatic gesture of protectiveness as her arm stretches toward the infant, tell the same story of horror and helplessness suffered by the other millions of bombed-out civilians.

Shattered walls and gaping holes disclose embarrassed interiors, mutely apologizing for their nakedness, inclining even the most curious eyes to turn respectfully away.

The docks were a shocking mess, and gruesome business was transpiring. Some sheet- and blanket-covered bodies were lying on stretchers. Prisoners of war, carrying large baskets, were picking up crimson-stained arms, legs, and other recognizable sections of human anatomy. They clearly evidenced their distaste for the job, and the attitude of their guards, unlike that of the previous day, was most unamiable. After all, the prisoners were still foster brother to the enemy, and the enemy had caused the death of these Americans.

Three American submarine chasers had been tied up at the pier the night before. When the raid began, one sub chaser got under way. Dur-



Digging in debris of rock and twisted steel, working parties of German and Italian prisoners under guard search for remains.



← **A Sicilian mother** and her children, an hour after German raid.

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ONLY A BOOKSTAND WAS SALVAGED; AN ARMY TRUCK WILL CLEAR AWAY WHAT WAS HOME



YANKEE GUARDS: "YOUR PALS MADE THIS MESS, NOW YOU PRISONERS CAN CLEAN IT UP!"



ing that series of explosions which had so shaken the hotel, a bomb scored a direct hit on one of the remaining ships, starting a fire which exploded the depth charges of both chasers. There were two survivors. Now, only bits of splintered wood remained afloat. On the dock, among twisted remnants of superstructure, were the mangled bodies of eighty American dead.

"Bill" Potts, Electrician's Mate 2nd Class, one of the chasers' survivors, was eighteen years old. He had hit the sack aboard his ship and was sleeping when General Quarters was sounded. He dressed, went topside, and, looking towards the stern, saw a few planes silhouetted against the flare of the searchlights. Bill's first impulse was to get under something and he dove for the hatch just as a bomb struck aft. The concussion bounced him around on all fours, like a rubber ball. He struggled up, saw the fire, and yelled to anybody within possible range of his voice: "Better get off; she's going up!" With a strength born of necessity, he picked up a shipmate who had lost a leg in the blast, scrambled over the side, and made for a raid shelter.

Harry McLynden, the other survivor, was also eighteen years old. He was a gunner. When the bomb hit, Harry half jumped and was half blown overboard. Seconds later his ship disintegrated before his eyes. Dazed and blinded by the explosion, he floundered his way through the water toward distant voices. Harry was too numb from shock to know whether he was hurt; he moved only mechanically, but somehow managed to scramble onto shore. Again he stumblingly followed voices until somebody grabbed his arm. After a time, his

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sight returned and shock wore off.

Weeks later, newspapers in the states printed the following terse statement: *"The Navy reported that Submarine Chasers 694 and 696 were sunk with some casualties in the Mediterranean area as a result of enemy bombing."*

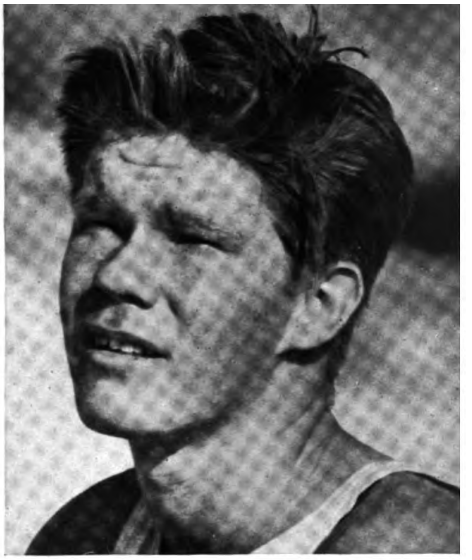
Behind the colorless brevity of a communiqué lies the more cruelly vivid picture. The men who dictate such communiqués deplore the necessity of using terms that are revealing in one sense but sorely inadequate in another. One officer said he had often been tempted to write something like this: "In taking Sector 92 our loss was extremely heavy: one Pvt. Harry Newcombe—young, brash, and none too brilliant, but a swell guy and a magnificent soldier. We mourn his death."

The stream of Palermo citizens to and from the protecting hills back of the town was already coursing through the streets. Some civilians who had been away were returning to see whether they still had homes or shops. Others, frightened anew by the raid, had again determined to leave. On the roads outside of town the two streams of traffic met and exchanged tidings, whereupon some of them made an about-face and again sought sanctuary in the hills.

Personnel of Allied Military Government, under the command of Maj. Gen. Lord Rennell O'Bride, former British Ambassador to Italy, and Brig. Gen. William McSheely, had already been flown in by ATC and was now at work in the Pirelli Rubber Company building establishing emergency military government measures to nullify the confusion which had set in upon the flight of the Fascist officials.

It is the Allies' custom, pursuant to capturing a city, to form two-thirds of



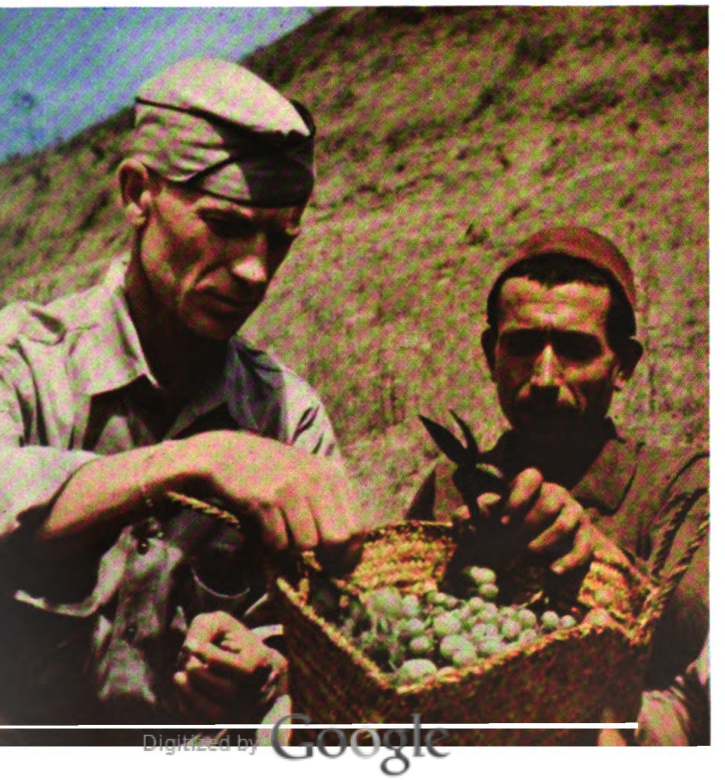


↑ **Teen-aged** Harry McLynden, GM2c, and Bill Potts, EM2c, survived the explosion. (*below*) Sicilian fathers wonder if liberation will bring food and security.



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Dawn after the raid. The rising mist from the burned-out smoke-pots lends a softer aspect to Sicily's once proud metropolis.



Ernie Pyle, the beloved chronicler of fighting Yankee servicemen overseas contemplates the purchase of grapes from native vendor.

the local AMG of officers from the nation effecting the victory, the remaining third of officers from the other side of the alliance. Thus in Palermo, the Americans were carrying on the bulk of the work, and, to my untrained eye, doing it very effectively.

From Maj. A. L. Raffa, who had been an insurance specialist in the states before the war, I learned some of the difficulties encountered by the recently inaugurated AMG in maintaining the existing statutes in Italy as required by International Law. One of Mussolini's methods of increasing the birth rate was by the taxation of all working people so that lump-sum payments could be provided at marriage. On condition that both parties were under twenty-six years of age, the sum of 400 liras was paid. The birth of

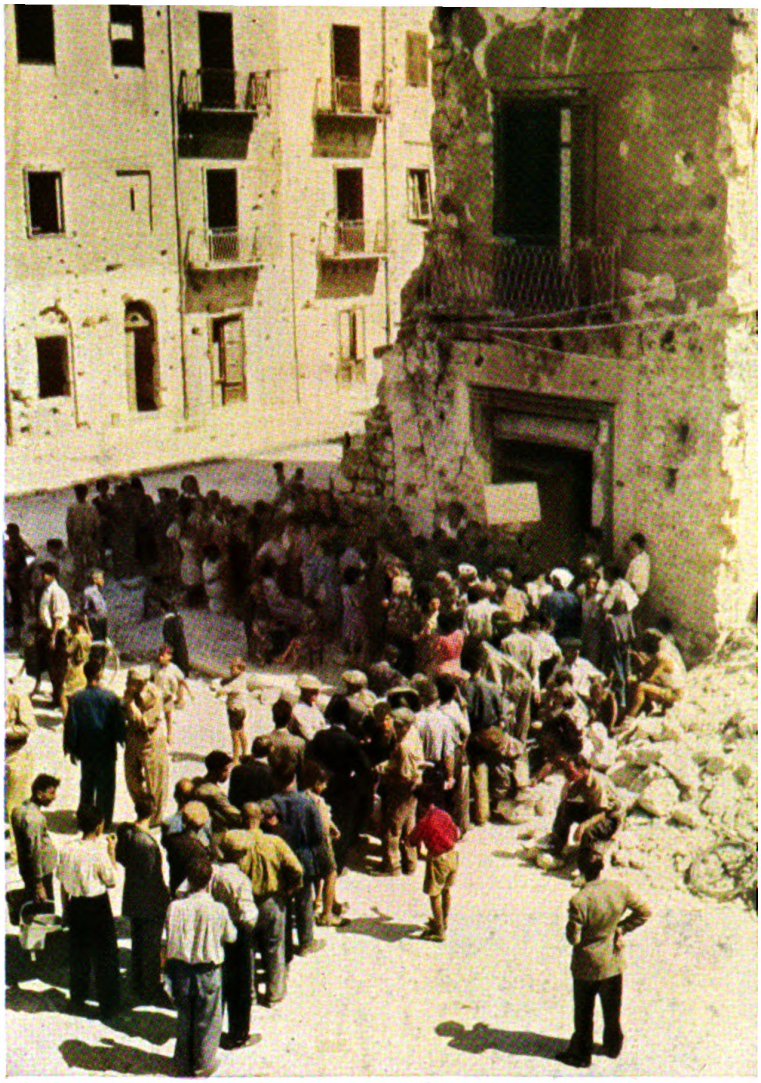
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a child drew between 200 and 300 liras, and the sum increased with progressive births. Bachelors were taxed. Married couples could arrange for loans to purchase furniture and deduct 10 per cent for each child born.

These and many other existing laws have to be studied carefully and maintained until the Italians are ready to manage their own affairs. AMG's functions are those of a trustee in bankruptcy. They were short-handed upon arrival and asked for the release of non-fascist prisoners to help in the reorganization.

At AMG headquarters,which was busier than ever straightening out civilian affairs, Lt. Col. Geo. H. McCallrey told me that a peasant from the countryside had come in that morning with a note scrawled in German on a rough piece of paper. It read: "The bearer of this note is authorized to collect from the United States Government the sum of one horse. July 19, 1400 hours." It was signed "Ralph A. Schwickert," and bore the number and designation of a Nazi regiment. It seemed that trooper Schwickert had been in a hurry to escape with his retreating companions, and had appropriated the steed after giving the peasant an IOU on Uncle Sam. So that the farmer could get his wheat crop harvested, AMG arranged for the peasant to receive another horse from the carabinieri, the Italian police.

Although Palermo is situated in a fertile section of the island, and the wheat fields normally produce sufficient flour for the area, there was now a serious shortage. The Germans had confiscated every pound they could lay hands on, and many farmers, hoping for a rise in price, had hoarded their supplies. Consequently, the city was destitute of bread. As yet, American supplies consisted of little more than Army provisions. To offset this, the Americans put on the market every bit of flour they had, pretending to have an unlimited supply. This ruse succeeded in decreasing the price and also in inducing the farmers to release their hoarded wheat, which was immediately bought up by AMG. Now there was food for everyone. Placards were posted announcing that bread and flour would be sold at designated places throughout the city. And then the



Queues for men and for women form breadline outside bakery. (*below*) Major Raffa, AMG, helps native girls find lost relatives.



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Capt. Charles Poore, (New York) of Allied Military Government, assists in the distribution of bread and flour to civilians.

The fertile hills of Sicily normally produce enough wheat for an abundance of flour, but Nazis had taken all they could find.



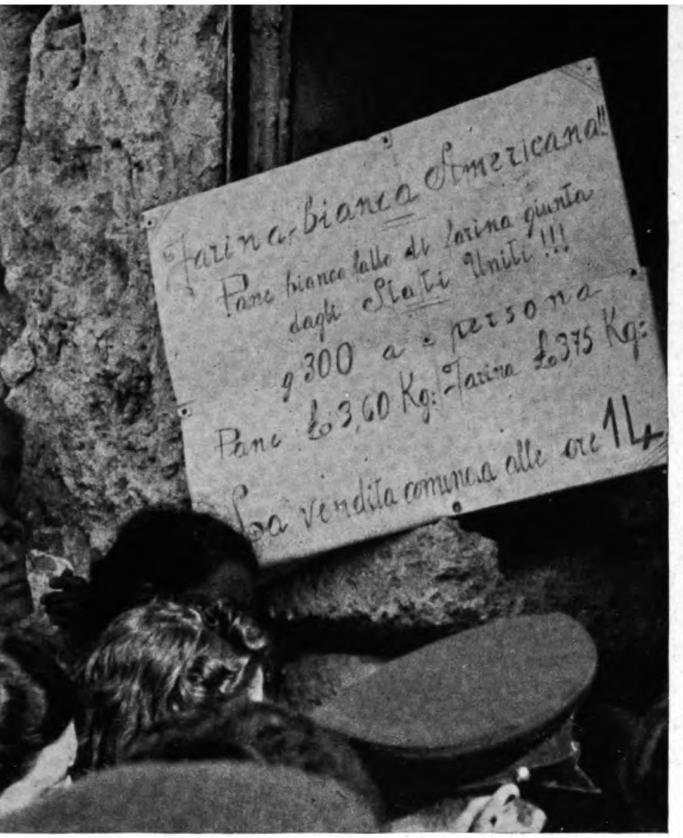
bread lines formed, men in one queue and women in another.

In all ration lines, pregnant women were permitted to stand at the head of the line. A few women, fearing the supply would be exhausted before they received their share, were detected with pillows stuffed under their dresses. Others resorted to pinching their children, hoping that their cries would move the merciful to sacrificing their rightful place in line. The impulses of hungry human beings are seldom congenial to the well-fed. A wrinkled eighty-two-year-old woman, weakened from undernourishment, kissed the hands of the American who meted out her supply.

AMG provides food but does not give it away. It is charged to the Italian government, to be paid after the war.

Pvt. Guiseppe Adami, to the citizens of Palermo, was the incontestable American paragon. They kissed his hand, fawned upon him, obeyed him, and loved him. And why not? Pvt. Guiseppe Adami was really Maestro Adami, one of their

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At last—white American flour! Each person in line is rationed 300 grams of flour or 200 grams of bread (loaf and a half) per day.



↑ **Holding child** of mother waiting in bread line, Private Guiseppe Adami, in native tongue, answers questions of puzzled Sicilians.



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LIEUT. GEN. CARL SPAATZ, CG OF THE USAAF IN THE NORTH AFRICAN THEATRE

very own boys. Had he not been a great musician, master of both violin and piano? Had he not toured throughout Europe giving magnificent concerts at the famous halls? Why, once he had even come to Palermo and played at the Massimo Theatre. That was a long time ago, in 1919, before he had left for the states and the Metropolitan Opera Company, before he had become famous on two continents as musician and arranger, and before his radio career.

Now here he was, busy as ever, only it is running the government for a strange new order called AMG that occupies the time of the maestro. Did you see him passing out all that beautiful white flour? Not since 1914 has there been such flour in Sicily. Such a disgrace that he had detected two women with pillows under their skirts. But perhaps the great maestro realizes how difficult it is to be a mother in these horrible times when one must watch the flesh drop by the pound from the bones of little children.

Mussolini had said America had a strange draft law and only millions of gangsters would make up its army. But look! A great maestro is only a private; it must be a wonderful army when such men are willing to be privates. That Mussolini, delinquente! disgraziato! villiacchi! He had forgotten the Garibaldi curse: *"Any Italian who raises his hand against England will be cursed forever!"* Such suffering we have been forced to endure, such hunger. Perhaps now that the maestro is back, and the Americans and British, things will be easier.

Private Adami was very humble. He knew these people and was proud that he had been selected to help even as a subordinate private. He said he had not seen a well-nourished child since his arrival in Palermo. I think Private Adami preferred passing out bread and flour to Sicilians to being a four-star general. I think AMG was very fortunate, or very clever, to have Adami and others like him trained for such tasks. I hope that when AMG sets up office in Berlin, they will have German Adamis to pass out flour and bread. But perhaps Germans are different...

The Italians had not fought as hard as they might have. Major Quello had asked me if I had noticed all the newly painted farms from the air when entering Palermo. Each one concealed a camouflaged pill box. The Italians could have put up a wonderful defense if they had so desired. But no. After the Nazi armies departed, the Italians had raised the white flags and walked out of the pill boxes, leaving untouched their stores of ammunition and well-oiled guns.

There were also well-authenticated reports of German reluctance to tangle with certain of our weapons. Forty of them had been court-martialed for their refusal to attack our four-motored bombers with their fighter planes. Our amphibious tanks had impressed them enormously. They could not understand how these "heavily armored" contraptions could ply, with such apparent ease, with gasoline from ship to field.

More than half of the German prisoners taken in Sicily were what would be called, in the American Army, Limited Service — men recovered from wounds and the like.

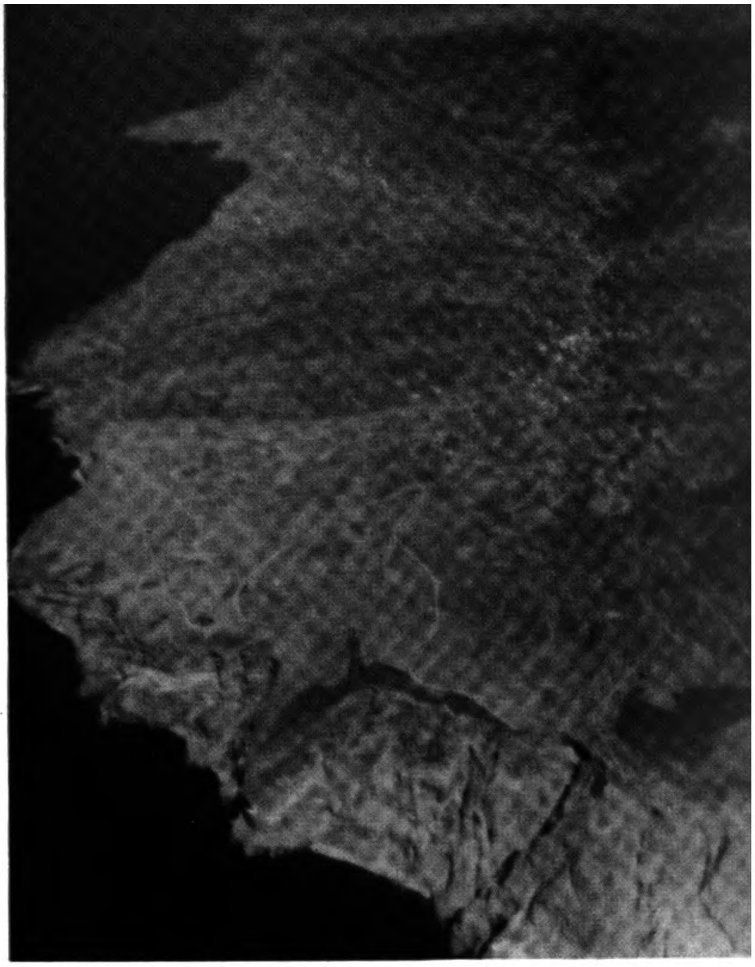
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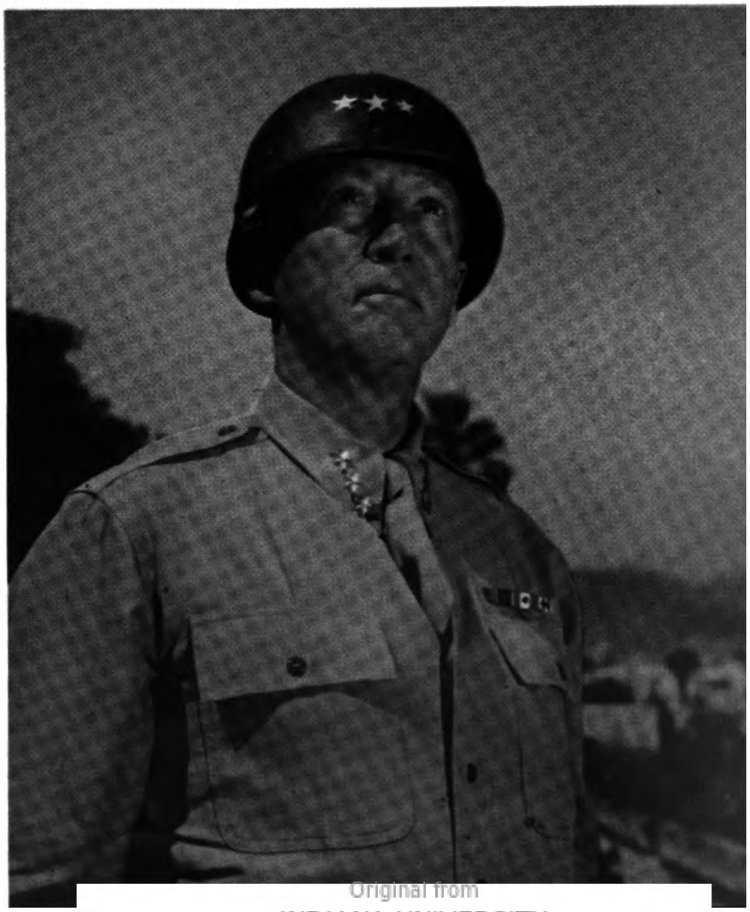
After talking to many residents of Palermo, I was convinced that the Germans never had been popular with the people. Many knifings and shootings had taken place between Nazi and Italian soldiers. Within a few days of Italy's declaration of war on June 11, 1940, the Germans entered Palermo and remained there until driven out by the Allies. They had the unlovable habit, when leaving restaurants, of suggesting insolently, "Let Mussolini pay for it." They also refused to pay local sales taxes. The good manners they are supposed to have displayed in the early occupation of Paris were not evidenced in Italy. Nazi arrogance was further exposed in one of their favorite remarks to the Italians: "You don't love us, but you respect us; we love you, but don't respect you."

The time had come when I must leave Palermo. It had been a most enlightening experience, as well as a somewhat nerve-shattering one. My overseas assignment had required only behind-the-battle-scenes coverage, and I had somewhat deplored the lack of more intimate concern with real combat, but Palermo had changed my mind. I now had no desire for closer contact. My period of danger had been a mere 45-minute interlude marring an otherwise peaceful, though gruesome, stay. The boys stationed there had taken that sort of punishment in wholesale lots, and never did I hear them indulge in more than the customary and expected amount of "griping" about their lot. Even when I had stood down there on the dock near the wrecks of the two subchasers and heard the officers calling the roll of survivors, the only impression I received was that of a grim, thoroughly justifiable determination to even the score with an enemy who had taken such toll in American lives.

Among the passengers on our return flight to Tunis was Ernie Pyle, looking tired and careworn as a result of the Sicilian campaign. Our interest was heightened when, after leaving the southern shores of Sicily, we flew only fifty feet above the Mediterranean. Enemy planes were returning to North Africa to bomb our installations, and the American boys behind the antiair-

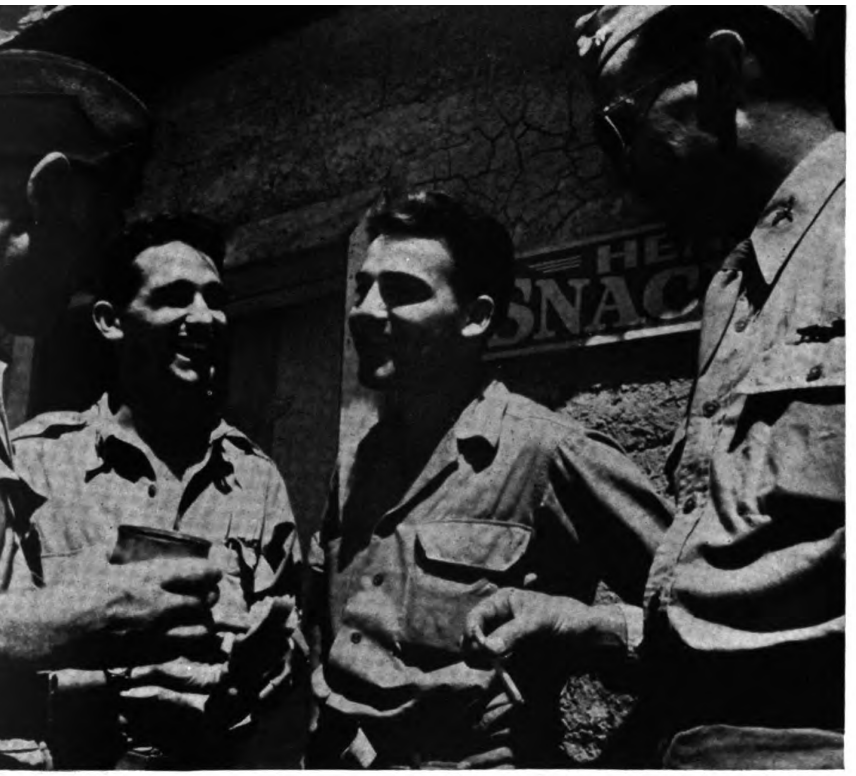


PANTELLERIA, FORCED TO SURRENDER BY PRESSURE OF AIR FORCES ALONE



LIEUT. GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR., REVERED BY MEN OF HIS SEVENTH ARMY

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Spam sandwiches and lemonade for passengers en route, served at Snack Bar managed by Pvt. Henry Assenheimer. (*below*) Maison Blanche Airport, Algiers.



craft guns on shore were taking no chances when warned of oncoming planes. They shot first and asked questions afterward, so our low-flying maneuver was an attempt to avoid detection. The pilot told us that sometimes he had flown so close to the waves that water had been drawn up by the prop wash and sprayed back over the wings.

From Tunis to Algiers is a short flight, only 286 air miles. Our trip was pleasant and smooth, above fertile, cultivated fields. It was serene and soothing after the sanguinary affray on the Palermo docks. However, the barrage balloons that floated over every port along that stretch of Africa's northern coast belied the peaceful atmosphere of the countryside below.

We made a brief stop at Telergma. Here we were surprised by a sign that read "Henry's Snack Bar." Pvt. Henry Assenheimer of Newark, N. J., had felt the need of just such a refreshment spot for the hungry passengers en route and had talked his CO into permitting him to operate this roadside stand. We finished our hasty lunch, which consisted of a Spam sandwich and warm powdered lemonade, and were off again for French Algeria.

Algiers

While Capt. Richard L. Bonnell of Memphis, Tenn., a pilot with whom I had flown previously, was bringing the ship down to Maison Blanche airport at Algiers, we saw below us a harbor literally jammed with ships. From one of them, clouds of oily, black smoke jetted skyward. Two weeks earlier the Germans had bombed the harbor and scored a hit on a munitions ship, which blew up, setting the

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tanker afire. It was still burning. I learned upon landing that 800 people had been killed in that raid.

I pushed my way through the scores of British and American soldiers milling about the airport waiting for plane transportation, and checked my baggage, retaining musette bag and camera. I then imposed myself upon a jeepful of young officers, who drove me to the Bob Hope show at the Engineers Unit three miles distant. A platform had been erected in a large open area. About it were gathered thousands of troops to laugh at the comedian and whistle appreciatively at Frances Langford. Hope's appearance brought thunderous applause. Perhaps the biggest factor behind the success of the USO units is that of bringing top entertainers to the troops. The realization is created among the men that they are not out of things; rather, the big show is overseas.

Of course, nearly everybody who goes to Algiers wants to see the famous Casbah, meaning "fortress," in the Moorish section of the city. The Casbah was the ancient stronghold of the Deys of Algeria when piracy was rampant in the Mediterranean. Its inhabitants are Arab, French, Spanish, Jewish, and Turkish, and mixtures of all these, the result of ancient conquests by the various peoples. The hill on which it is built is a confusing jumble of steps, landings, arches, and tortuous passageways, not too safe even in daytime and very dangerous after dark.

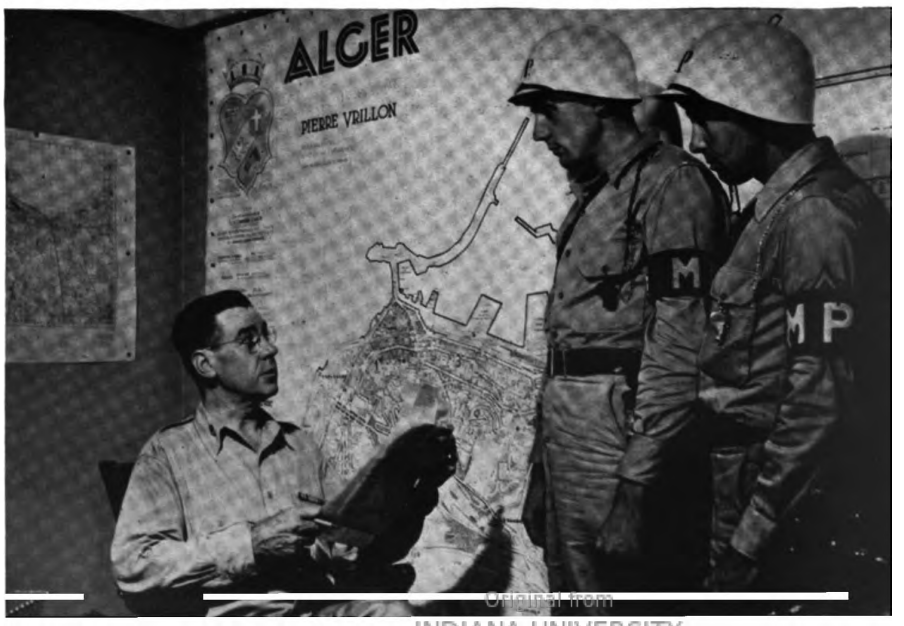
The Casbah is strictly out of bounds, and former Texas Ranger Lt. Col. Dott E. Smith's corps of especially picked and trained Military Police make it their business to see that the edict is observed. MP's in pairs patrol the entire city of Algiers as well as the Casbah. They are often called upon



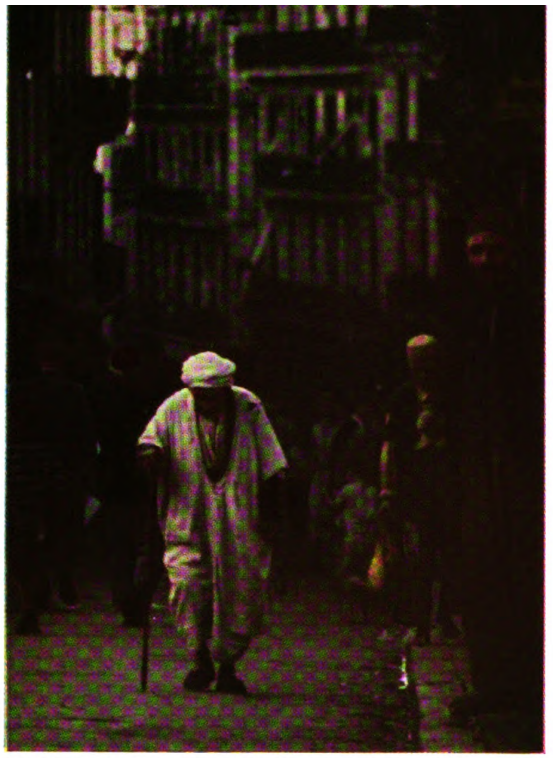
BOMBED TANKER IN ALGIERS HARBOR. *(BELOW)* ALGIERS' UNDAMAGED MAIN THOROUGHFARE



LT. COL. DOTT E. SMITH, PROVOST MARSHAL, INSTRUCTS MP'S IN POLICING OF CASBAH



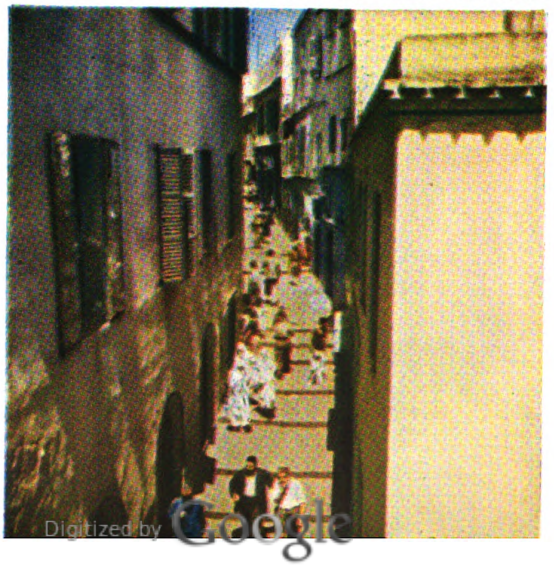
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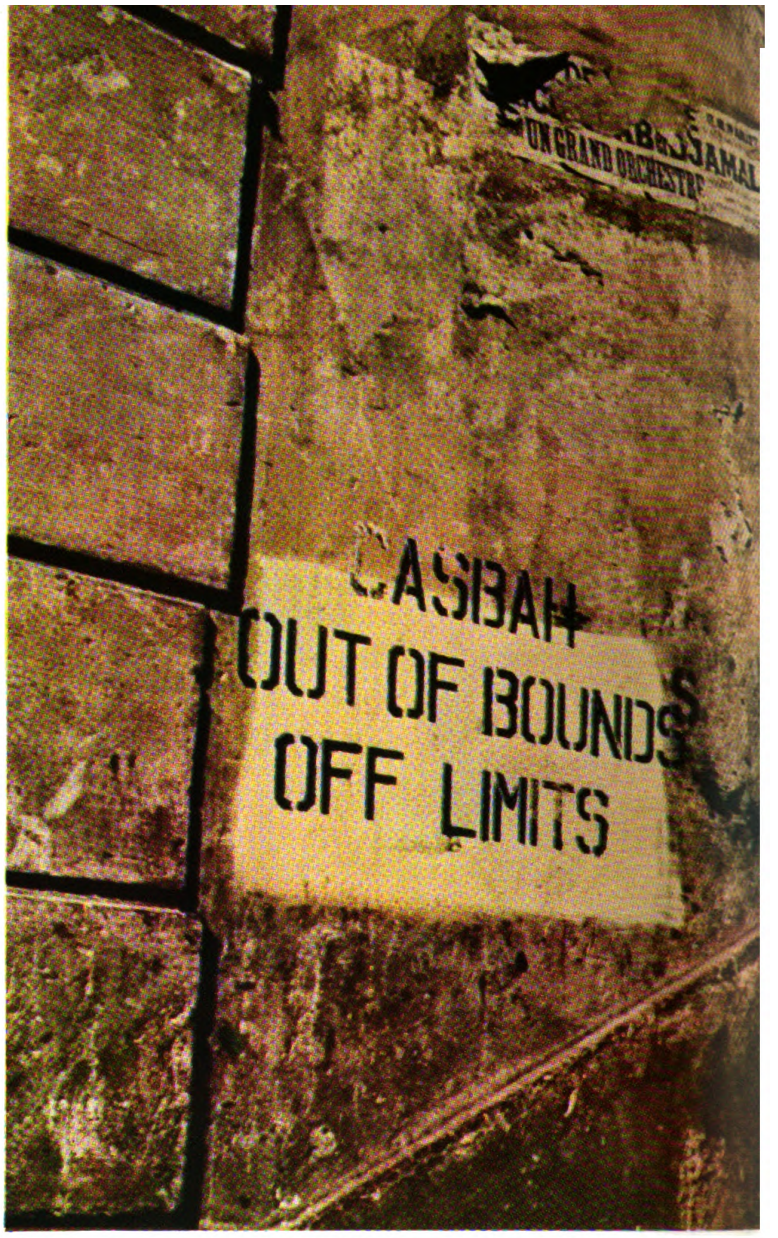


CASBAH'S NARROW THOROUGHFARES, TOO STEEP FOR VEHICLES



AMERICAN MP'S AND FRENCH GENDARMES PATROL CASBAH DISTRICT





ALL ENTRANCES TO ALGIERS' CASBAH ARE PATROLLED AND PLAINLY TAGGED "OUT OF

to employ judo, in which they were thoroughly instructed during their training period in the states. Many of them speak French fluently and sometimes there is joint patrol with the French Civil Police as well as the Navy Shore Patrol and the British MP's.

I was escorted through the Casbah with Sgt. David Hallett, of Detroit, as interpreter and Sgt. Louis E. McNarland of Michigan and Pvt. Wilbur I. Willis of North Carolina as bodyguards. The quarter is unglamorous and dirty, with garbage and filth strewn about the streets of steps and fetid odors constantly assailing the nostrils. A huge rat boldly sat on an electric wire and followed our progress with glittering, beady eyes. Women, unsightly and unclean for the

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BOUNDS" FOR SIGHT-SEEING GI, WHO IS NOT ABOVE DISGUISING HIMSELF IN MOHAMMEDAN *PARDAH* TO GAIN ENTRANCE TO OVERROMANTICIZED DISTRICT

most part, lounged in the doorways until they spotted my camera. Then they scampered like scared rabbits, slamming the doors of the houses as they dashed under cover. Many are hiding from the police and had no desire to have their whereabouts disclosed through photographs. One's impression is that every entrance leads to a house of prostitution. This is not quite the case, even though there are known to be 900 such places in Algiers, a city of some 260,000 population. Most of the women were barefooted and veiled. The Casbah is decidedly unlike the film *Algiers,* which dealt with the section. One is repelled rather than drawn to it, and I certainly had no envy of Sergeant Mac who regularly had to patrol the area from 8:00 P.M. until midnight.

After spending my first night at Algiers in Red Cross Headquarters, I managed to find a room in the Alletti Hotel, which I shared with Col. G. W. Noland, who had just arrived from service in England. The Alletti was adjacent to the busy waterfront and situated at the base of the great hill upon which Algiers is built. We shared a bottle of Chablis on the veranda, watching and discussing the activities in the harbor until midnight, when we retired. It seemed to me that I had barely closed my eyes when the dreaded air-

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FUNNIEST BOB HOPE GAG TO THIS ENTERTAINMENT-STARVED AUDIENCE IN ALGIERS WAS THE ONE ABOUT THE WREN WITH TWO "PIPS" — ON HER SHOULDERS

raid siren whined shrilly. It was four o'clock in the morning.

Fumbling, we tugged on our clothes and sped downstairs to the entrance of the shelter, a former wine cellar beneath the hotel. I doubt if either of us will ever know why, but for some inexplicable reason we stopped at the shelter door, looked at each other, turned, and dashed upstairs and out into the night.

Panting as much from excitement as effort, the colonel and I ran stumblingly through the blackness up flight after flight of steps away from the vulnerable waterfront. We scrambled upward until utterly winded, stopping finally beside a tree at the edge of a small park. Through the silence we heard the first faint drone of planes approaching from the hills behind us. At that instant hell burst with furious intensity from all the land-based antiaircraft guns and from every ship in the harbor. Virtually a wall of steel was erected to prevent the enemy planes from penetrating the harbor area. All the fire was directed our way.

Too late we realized that we were caught directly in the cross fire with no protection whatsoever. The noise was deafening. Rockets and tracer bullets slashed the sky directly above us. Shrapnel hailed all about us, and the bursts immediately overhead transformed the heavens into an arrangement contrived by Satan for the brush of Van Gogh. Red-hot spent flak poured down into the trees and all about our helmetless heads. Instinctively we crouched behind a tree.

Suddenly the colonel grabbed my arm, saying, "Look, Dmitri, we have company." I glanced over my shoulder and in the weird half-light barely discerned a sheeted figure slinking behind us. As we darted from tree to tree, and from one flak-peppered spot to another, so did the specter, a pathetic and cringing Arab, hugging close to us, determined, if he were to die, not to do it alone. A bomb hit very close. Simultaneously we

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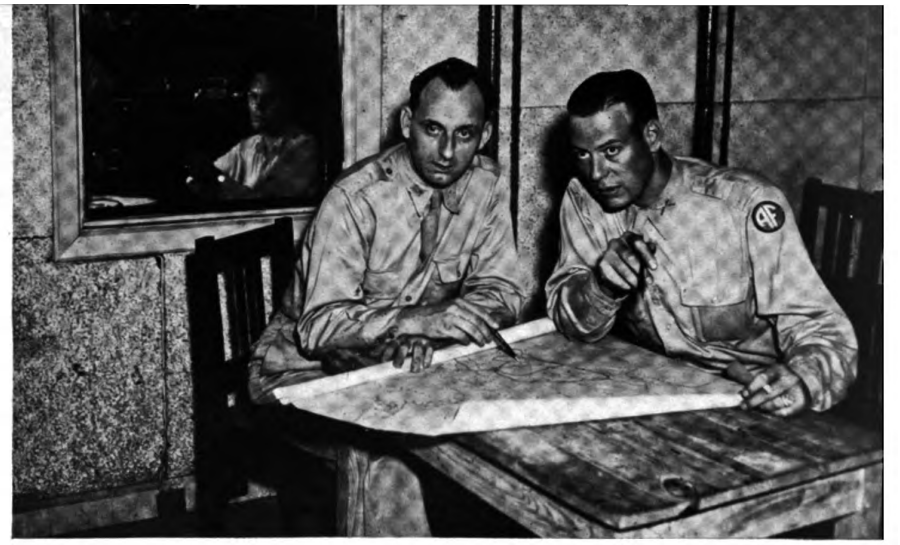
dropped flat into a cactus plant, certain that this time we were hit. When we stood up, the Arab was gone, but the German bombers weren't; they kept coming in.

The searchlights, playing blindman's buff in the sky, finally clustered on a plane almost overhead. Our antiaircraft fire intensified and the plane fell in flames. The smoke screen rising from the smoke pots tinted the ever flickering scene with yellow, red, and orange.

During the fifty minutes of the raid, two of the most helpless men in the world clutched at trees, dodged, fell flat, and cowered in the spasmodic blackness of that hill above Algiers. Both of us were cut and bruised, but only from our numerous falls. At last it was over. Weak-kneed, we descended the flak-littered steps, marveling at our escape and laughing now and then. But the laughter was a bit hysterical.

Back at the Alletti, the colonel and I stood on the balcony and surveyed the harbor in the early dawn. All was quiet. Our defense had prevented any damage whatever to the ships. We learned later that seven of the forty attacking German bombers had been shot down. There were eight casualties, four of them killed by that bomb which had struck so close to us up on the hill.

Another battle, a verbal one, known as the battle of *Bellyache Beach* was carried on almost every evening high on the balcony of a large apartment at 29 Rue Michelet. The host was Lt. Col. Marty Sommers, *Saturday Evening Post* editor on leave to General Eisenhower's Public Relations Office in Algiers. Bellyache Beach was a narrow balcony, enclosed by a three-foot wrought-iron railing and overlooking



Radio room at Public Relations Office, Algiers. Capt. Albert M. Wharfield, Communications Officer (*right*) and his engineering expert, Capt. Walter R. Brown.



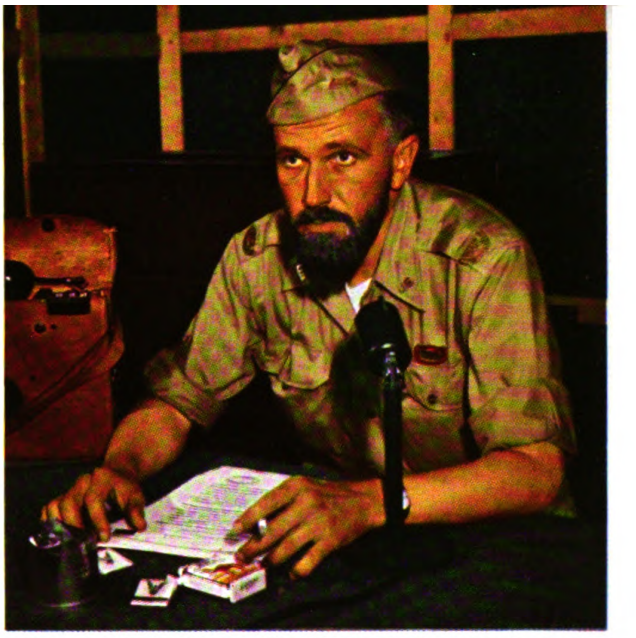
War dispatches are born in AFHQ pressroom. (*below*) Lt. Col. Martin Sommers (*left*) and British Capt. T. L. Laister check cleared copy from censor's logging room.



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LIEUT. CHAS. A. BATSON INTERVIEWS CPL. KEN ROE (KY.) FOR ARMY HOUR



CORRESPONDENT JOHN "BEAVER" THOMPSON OF THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

the harbor. To Marty's friends, including several correspondents and many Army officers, this balcony will long be remembered for the heated discussions that took place among Cy Peterman of the *Philadelphia Inquirer,* Demaree Bess of the *Saturday Evening Post,* Fred Painton of *Reader's Digest,* Drew Middleton of the *New York Times,* and Virgil Pinkley and Ed Beattie of UP. On the balcony were fought and refought all the past battles of the war, as well as many yet in the future. Numerous magazine and newspaper articles were also hatched there.

When I related my morning's air-raid experience, Marty and Cy explained that in bombing Algiers, the Germans always attacked in low-flying planes from behind the hill. They came in low across the Mediterranean to avoid detection and flew in over the crest to drop their bombs on

COL. JOSEPH B. PHILLIPS *(RIGHT)*, ARMY PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER AT ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, WITH COL. J. V. McCORMACK, BRITISH DEPUTY PRO

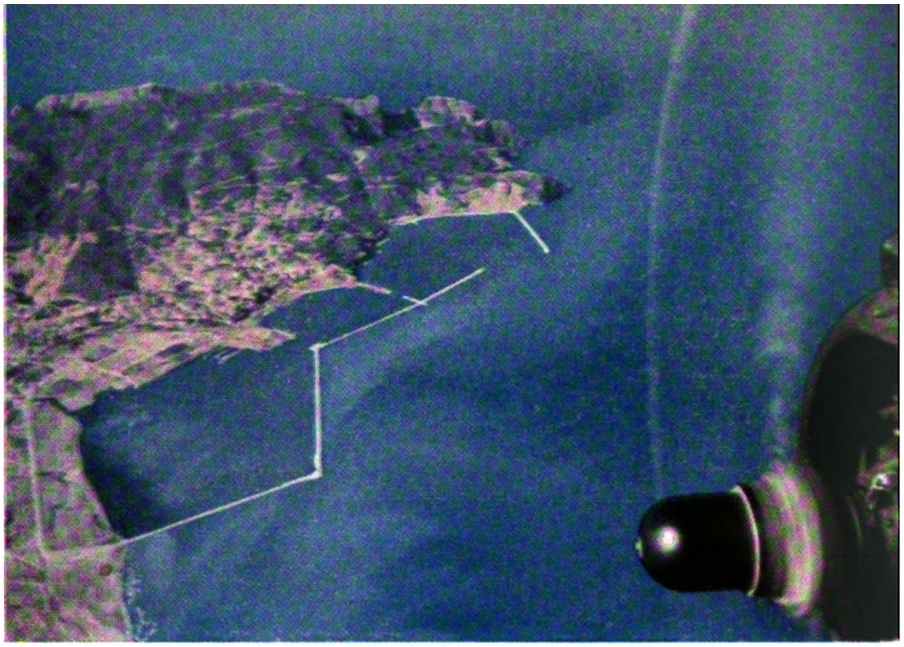


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the ships in the harbor. Our own antiaircraft units fired toward the hill and the oncoming enemy. We could not have been exposed more dangerously when we put ourselves directly between the planes and the concentrated blasts of ack-ack. Marty explained that most of the casualties during the raids on Algiers were due to flak wounds. I was advised to stay inside, even in my own bed, as was the practice of these seasoned initiates.

Colonel Sommers was second in command of Public Relations at Allied Forces Headquarters in Algiers. He escorted me through the offices so that I could obtain some photographs of the Army men and war correspondents who were sending their vivid accounts of the war to the people back home. In the large pressroom, filled with rows of tables, were men busy at their typewriters, men whose names are familiar to all American news readers. There was *Chicago Tribune's* John Thompson, with a hirsute chin which had earned him the sobriquet of Beaver, and whose participation in paratroop landings won him the respect of soldier and writer alike; Richard Tregaskis of INS and *Guadalcanal Diary* fame, who later suffered a painful and near-fatal wound in his quest for news; John Steinbeck en route to the combat areas; Clark Lee, Quentin Reynolds, and H. R. Knickerbocker just back from the Sicilian campaign, and many others. As the news reports were typed, they were rushed to the censor's logging room for clearance. Radio and cable communication facilities for transmitting the news stories and reports are provided by the Army.

Radio is three to six hours faster than cable. At this time Sgt. Wallace



MUCH OF NORTH AFRICA'S MEDITERRANEAN SHORELINE IS MOUNTAINOUS AND PRECIPITOUS

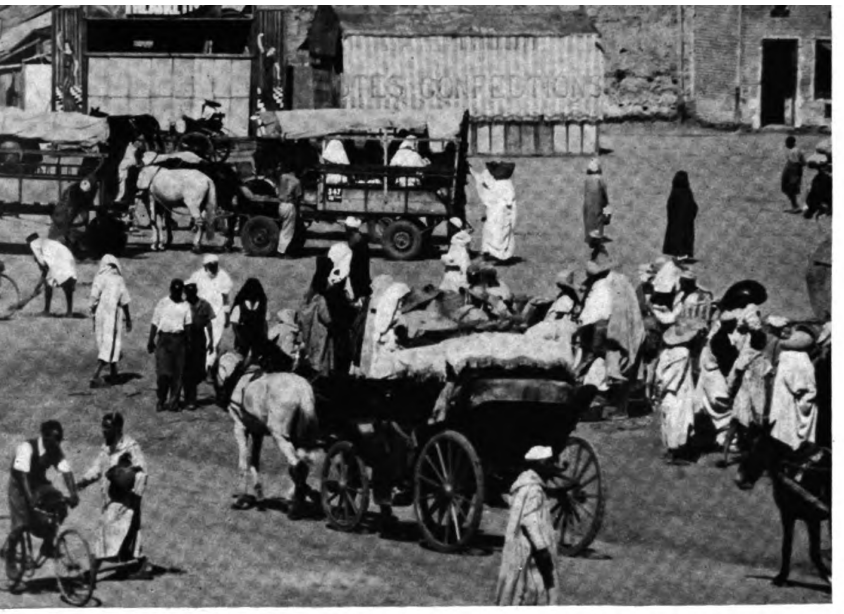
Irwin, Jr., was reading 8,000 words daily for radio transmission to American news agencies. In peak times, three men—Communications Officer Capt. Albert M. Wharfield, Radio Officer Lieut. Charles A. Batson, and Irwin—together have read off as many as 20,000 words in a day.

I had one more night in Algiers, a raidless one, for which I was grateful. The next morning we took off from Maison Blanche. The 230-mile flight from Algiers to Oran was a pleasant hour and a half, the blue Mediterranean to the

CASABLANCA, NOW FAR FROM COMBAT AREAS, WAS ONCE POINT OF AMERICAN INVASION



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HORSES SOLVE GASOLINE SHORTAGE IN MARRAKECH, MOROCCO. *(BELOW)* TAXICAB—2 HP



MAJ. CHAS. S. MOORE, A LIKELY BUYER, AS IS EVERY AMERICAN TO STREET MERCHANTS



north and the rugged Atlas Mountains to the south constantly within sight. We had lunch at Oran, one of the first North African towns to fall to the invading Americans. Then we continued up the valley of the Moulonga River, a rich, well-cultivated, and hilly country, devoted mostly to vineyards. Our next stop, a brief one, was Port Lyautey, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and the scene of some of the hardest fighting during the American landings at North Africa. The Sebu River, which flows past the town, forms a perfect letter S, and an airport had been built within each loop of the S. One of these airfields, the Aéronautique de Port Lyautey, was captured by an American destroyer in one of the strangest exploits of this war.

The old *Dallas,* built in 1920, was assigned to what might have been the suicidal task of steaming up the supposedly unnavigable Sebu to carry a detachment of American commandos. She ploughed through the submarine net at the river's mouth, slithered over numerous mud bars and shoals, and then, within two miles of the airport, ran aground. She stayed aground until the objective was reached. During that last stretch the engines turned at twenty knots while the ship forged ahead through the mud at about ten knots and finally reached the ramp at the airport, where the commandos went over the side. After a sharp engagement, assisted by the guns of the cruiser *Dallas,* the field was captured and in American hands.

Marrakech, Morocco

Historic Casablanca was our next stop en route to Marrakech. It was just north of this attractive resort

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RAGS OF GUNNY SACK, TOWELS, CEMENT BAGS, AND NATIVE HOMESPUN, PATCHED AND REPATCHED, FASHION TYPICAL GARB OF NORTH AFRICAN NOMAD

town that our troops landed on November 8, 1942, setting first foot on enemy soil. Aboard our plane was a man who had accompanied the original landing party, Capt. Walter P. Brown. As we crossed above the now peaceful strip of coastline, he remarked, "It certainly feels better to fly over this country than it did to be landing on the beaches down there." And his expression did not belie him.

We reached Marrakech late in the afternoon of a brilliantly sunlit day. The ancient streets and native market place were crowded with jostling people. One of the sorriest costumes to be seen in this section of North Africa is the covering of rags worn by many of the natives here. Made of gunny sacking, bits of discarded clothing, and apparently every other odd piece of cloth, the hooded, capelike garments appear fabricated of patch upon patch. Greasy with long wear, the heterogeneous raiment scarcely seems to have enough strength to hold together.

Transportation in Marrakech is exceedingly novel. American-built trucks and pleasure cars of indeterminate origin, their motors, crankcases, and other superfluous parts removed, roll about the streets on dubious rubber tires, drawn by horses. The vehicles serve both as taxis and as trucks.

I checked in with Maj. Charles S. Moore and was billeted at the hotel La Mamounia. Although the Army had contracted for a number of the rooms at this hotel, it continues to be operated by native owners. Air Transport Command Headquarters for the North African Wing were located in a requisitioned private home near the ancient Medina Wall, which was built some

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Popular host to American officers, who vie for invitations to Atlas Mountain palace, Talat N'Yacoub, is genial Moroccan Caliph. Guests: Dmitri, Mme. Eugène, Lieut. Pintér, and Capitaine Jean L. Eugène. *(below)* Col. Tom Mosley, CO, North African Wing, ATC.

eight centuries ago and now roughly encloses the native quarter of the city of 194,000 people.

The CO, Col. Tom Mosley, was one of the most efficient officers I had met. With utmost tact he managed to cut red tape and get done what was necessary. His first thought in any undertaking was whether it would win the war sooner. If not, he discarded the idea; otherwise, nothing could stop him. It was a joy to watch him function.

The colonel arranged a meeting with Capitaine and Mme. Jean L. Eugène, who had come to Marrakech in 1936 to handle native affairs for the French government. Their friend, Caliph Si El Hadj El Houssine bey Brahim Goundafi Tinmel, was giving a party the next day at his palace, Talat N' Yacoub, and had extended his invitation to include Lieut. Frank R. Choura, Lieut. Bruce E. Pintér, and me in the festivities.

As it was an 80-mile journey up into the mountains to



←LIEUTS. FRANK R. CHOURA AND BRUCE E. PINTÉR PASS TIME UNDER MARRAKECH DATE PALM

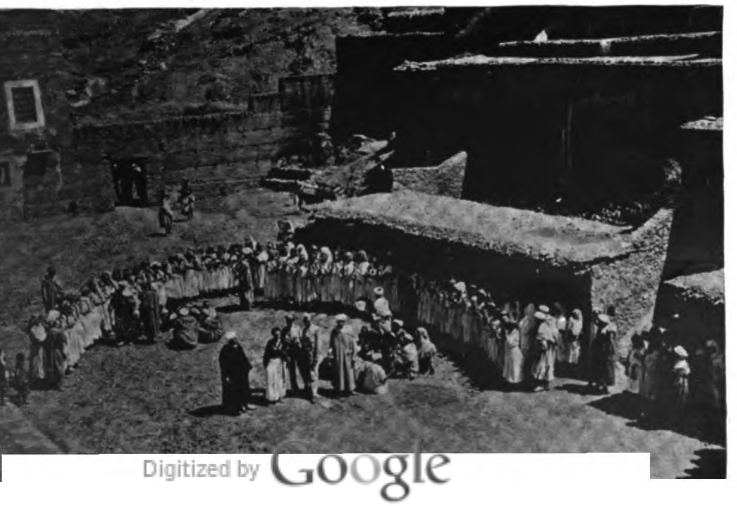
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AMERICAN GUESTS VISIT PALACE GROUNDS. *(BELOW)* CALIPH'S SUBJECTS



CALIPH INTRODUCES ENTERTAINERS TO GUESTS IN COURTYARD OF PALACE



the palace, we left by jeep early the following morning. The trip was a delightful one along roads winding through green and fertile country, much like that of the mountainous section of our own Wyoming.

As we entered the walled courtyard of the Caliph's residence, we saw hundreds of colorfully dressed natives arranged in four large semi-circles. Berber and Arabian girls, bejeweled with bracelets, earrings, and head ornaments, chanted several native songs to the accompaniment of large drums beat upon by huge blacks. The Caliph, as he invariably does for his guests, had invited natives living within his realm—Berbers, Arabs, Tuaregs, Jews, and Negroes—and they were as eager to entertain us as we were to enjoy their talent. Each group of natives represented its own community, and keen competition was displayed among them as each tried to outdo the other to win the Caliph's admiration and ours.

The Caliph spoke fluent French as well as his native Arabic and was an expansive and ingratiating host. Captain Eugène acted as our interpreter. As we entered the palace, the Caliph showed rare insight into the possible condition of our well-worn Army socks and told us that it would be unnecessary to follow the Arabic custom of removing our shoes. While the exterior of the palace was of the usual unattractive baked mud, save for a few interesting wrought-iron windows and inlays of Moorish tile, the interior was elaborately decorated. Ornate tapestries hung from the walls, thick Moorish rugs covered the floors, and numerous divans and ottomans were comfortably arranged about the rooms.

Eventually we came to the room in which we were to eat, off a small courtyard where a fountain played. We seated ourselves on the soft divans about a low serving table. Before the food was brought in, servants entered with large copper bowls, polished spouted ewers of warm water, scented soap, and clean white Turkish towels. Public laving is a necessary and welcome custom, since all food is eaten with the fingers from a common vessel.

Then a veritable deluge of assorted dishes was brought in. There were nine main courses

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PREVIOUS TO SUMPTUOUS BANQUET, 500 FESTIVELY COSTUMED NATIVE DANCERS, CHANTERS AND MUSICIANS IN COURTYARD ENTERTAIN GUESTS OF THE CALIPH



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CHANTING DANCERS KEEP RHYTHM WITH SHORT HOPS TO BEAT OF DRUMS



AMERICAN OFFICERS AND NATIVES DISPLAY THEIR MUTUAL CURIOSITY



of various kinds of meats and game, and numerous courses of vegetables, fruits, and pastries. One dish, which was served on a platter fully four feet across, consisted of an array of stuffed wild game covered with piping hot oriental sauces. In eating with the fingers, only the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand are used. Every so often we licked our fingers following the Caliph's lead, but nevertheless feeling so guilty that we would not have been surprised had our knuckles been rapped. The parade of food went on for an interminable time. Even though comparatively little of the food is consumed, none is ever wasted. Whatever is left is offered first to the native guests, then to the servants; what remains is consumed by the numerous dogs that the Caliph keeps about the grounds. At the conclusion of the meal, a strong, sweet tea was served. Later, when the table was removed, the dancing girls appeared, gracefully costumed in long, flowing dresses. While dancing they neither swayed nor swirled in the Anglo-Saxon manner, but hopped straight up and down, first on one foot, then on the other. I doubt very much that it would have interested the boisterous American jitterbugs. We, on the other hand, surfeited with food, would have been tortured by the gyrations of more active dancing. This was very restful. Our experience at the Caliph's palace so exactly followed the pattern of a cartoon in *Esquire* magazine that any moment I expected to turn a page and find a Petty girl staring at me.

It was time, now, to return to Marrakech, and, though sorry to leave our genial host, we said our good-bys. The coming night would be my last in Africa, and there were many things that I wished to purchase, such as oranges, lemons, and eggs to take to friends in Great Britain.

North Atlantic

Our flight from Marrakech to the British Isles was non-stop and we veered far to the West as we passed Spain and enemy territory. We made the 1,900 mile-trip in 10 hours and came down

→ LONE ICEBERG, FOUR CITY BLOCKS SQUARE, DRIFTS IN ARCTIC WATERS

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NAVIGATOR CARL R. ANDERSON SHOOTS SUN FROM TAIL OF C-87. *(BELOW) ARCTIC WASTES*



in a drizzling rain at the airport at Prestwick, Scotland, where we had breakfast. The rosy-cheeked lassies who served us knew from our suntans that we had just arrived from tropical war zones and beamed proudly as we exclaimed over the almost forgotten items of fare: fresh butter, rich cream, and wheat cakes.

At the next table sat a group of flying officers whose conversation disclosed that they had completed their required number of missions and were on their way home. I overheard some familiar places mentioned, Bengasi, Ploesti, Weiner Neustadt. There sat Hap Kendall of Chariton, Iowa, captain of the Liberator "Lucky," whose dramatic experiences on the Ploesti raid I have already described. With Hap were Lieut. L. E. Zaruba, of West Allis, Wis., and Lieut. W. H. Minder, of St. Paul, Minn. We were to be passengers together on the next plane bound for the states.

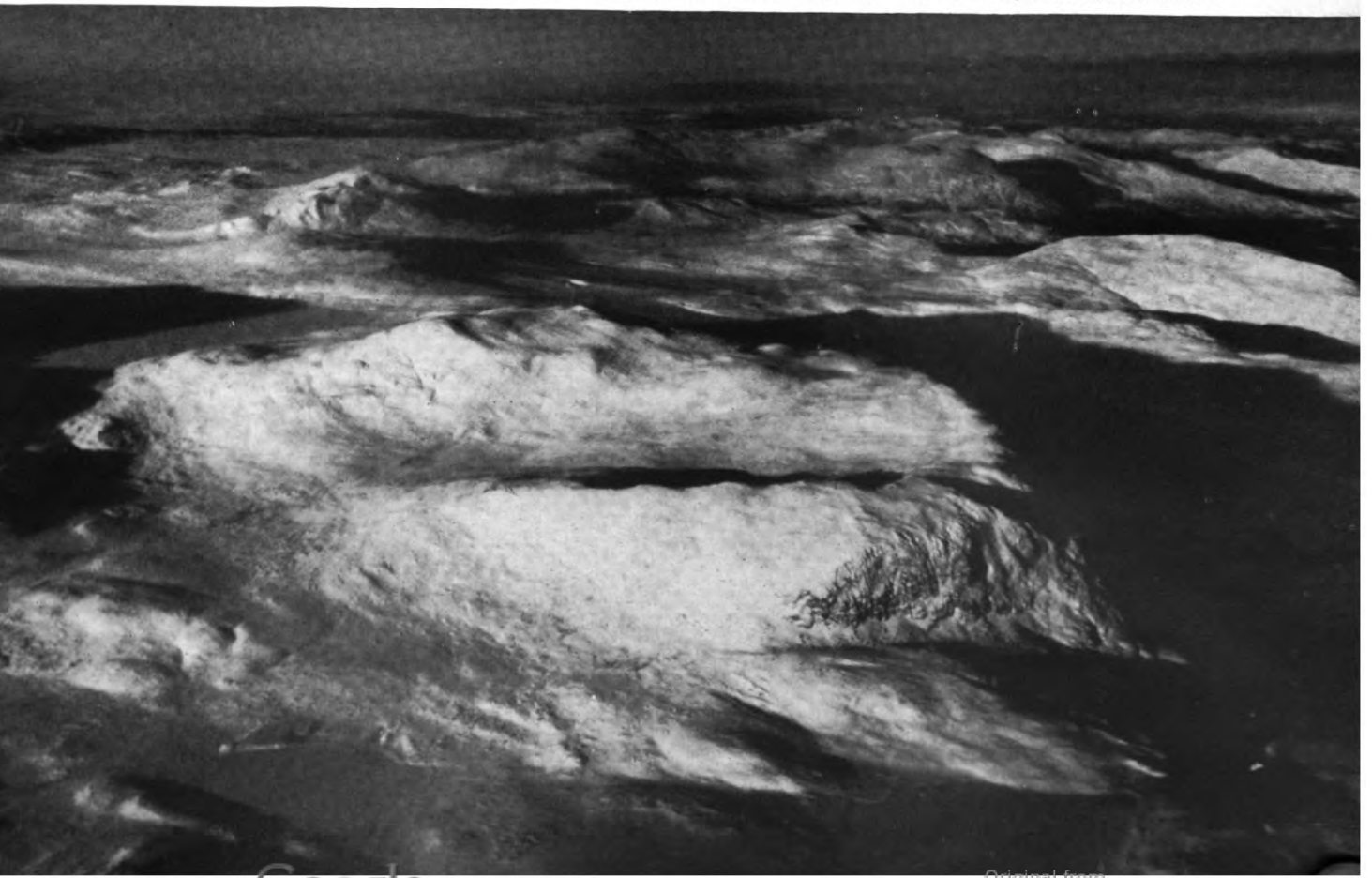
Since the possibility of enemy attack on the first stretch of our westward flight was not remote, we were briefed on *ditching procedure* (getting out of a plane that is forced to land on water). We were instructed to wear our life vests during the entire flight over water. At the command "Prepare for ditching," we were to brace ourselves for impact shock. Usually two are felt. In bucket seats, "Fasten seat belt, bend body forward and clasp hands under legs with the head clamped between legs." If you think this is an easy posture, just try it.

Four and a quarter hours after takeoff we arrived at Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. It was 5:10 P.M. We spent one hour for refueling and a light supper, and were off again, this time for Maine, 2,070 miles away. At last I was homeward bound, on the final

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GREENLAND'S NUMEROUS UNCHARTED FJORDS ARE A CONSTANT THREAT TO TRANSPORT PILOTS LOST WITHIN WALLS. *(BELOW)* LABRADOR'S MAINLAND



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BRIG. GEN. BENJAMIN F. GILES, ATC'S FIRST CG NORTH ATLANTIC WING

leg of my flight around the war fronts. Following the Great Circle route westward toward the setting sun, we encountered a strange phenomenon which doubtless will be commonplace to future air travelers. In this latitude, the speed of a plane is almost that of the earth as it spins on its axis. As a result, we had the setting sun before us for hours, as if a stage backdrop had been lowered and forgotten.

As we approached the southern coast of Greenland I recalled the bitterly cold days of December, 1942, when I had visited this ice-bound land to photograph the early installations of ATC in Greenland and at Goose Bay, in Labrador. It had been a frigid experience taking pictures at 20 to 30 degrees below zero, and my memories of the men I had seen — and of the exploits they had performed in the semidarkness of the Arctic winter — still were vivid.

Now, I looked down again upon the horizonless snowscape of Greenland's ice cap which is ten thousand feet in depth, and upon the hundreds of uncharted fjords, where many flight crews had lost their lives. Should a pilot by miscalculation fly up a wrong fjord, his doom is certain, for the walls are ever narrowing, and there isn't room to turn the big transports around.

When it is far enough below zero, you cease to feel the cold. Some zero level exists for misery, and below it flesh does not register. I remember seeing a mechanic working frantically in the gray light to warm up a Liberator, unaware that two solid white spots on his frostbitten cheeks were slowly widening.

NEW ARRIVAL TO LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN. COL. ROBERT W. C. WIMSATT (CENTER) AND LIEUT. COL. K. L. REAVES (LEFT) GREET LIEUT. COL. W. S. CARLSON



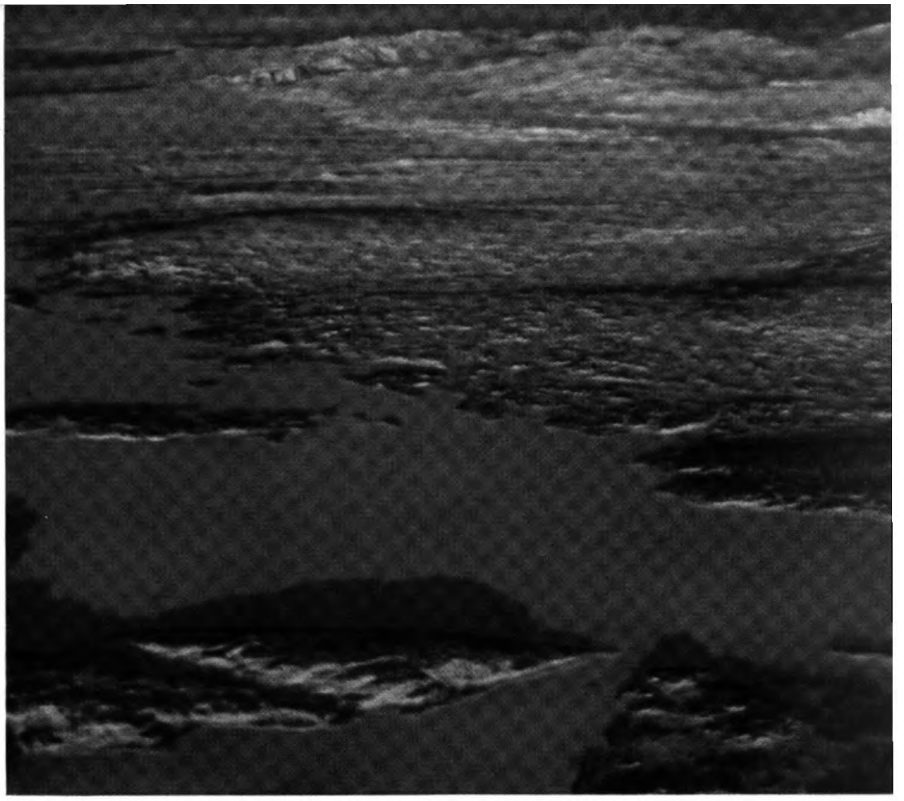
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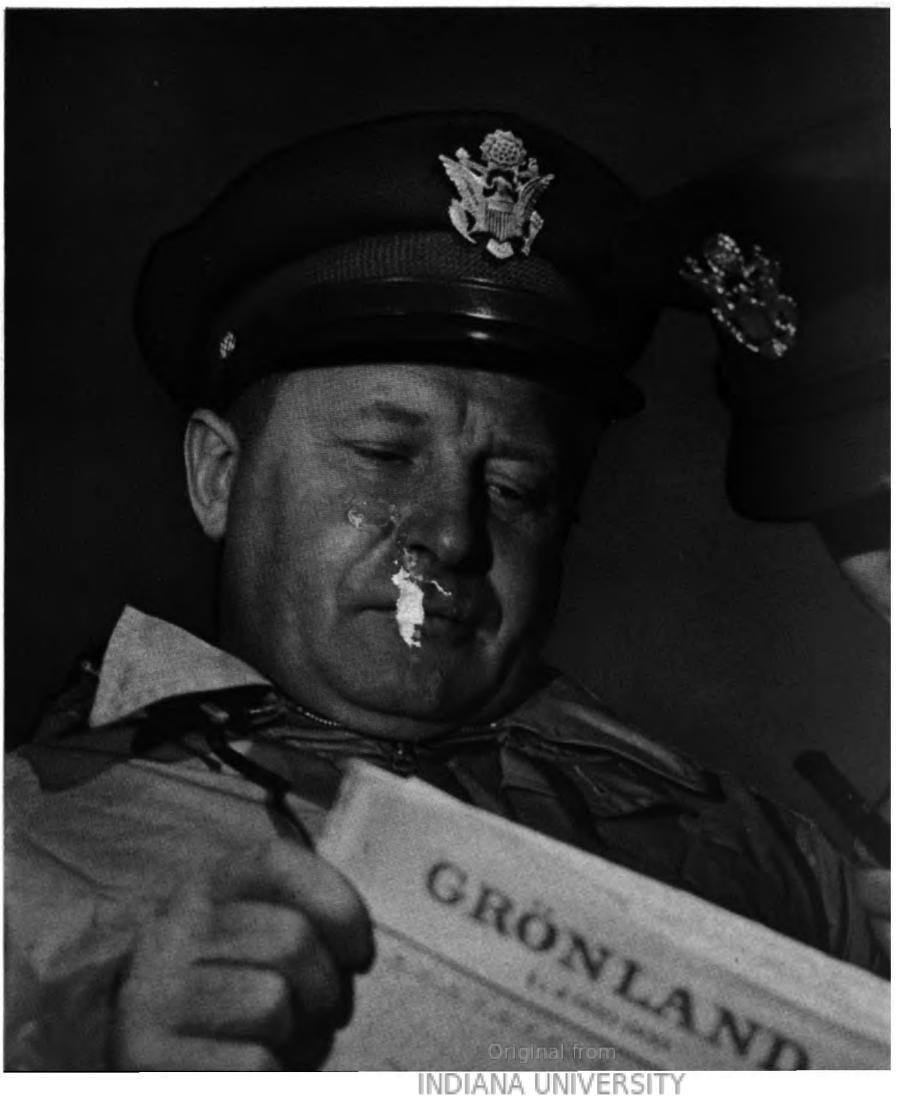
It is now publicly known that the weather bases established in Greenland have played a vital part in the success of our bombings of Hitler's European fortress. Winds and ocean currents that flow from Greenland set up storm fronts for the North Atlantic and the European Continent. Advance knowledge of their intensity and speed of travel enables our Air Forces commanders to plan their activities accordingly.

As far back as the summer of 1941, Colonel Bernt Balchen, veteran flier and explorer, led an expedition under secret orders to Greenland for the purpose of establishing the northernmost American air base. They discovered a Nazi weather station in daily communication with Berlin. This installation was destroyed by the colonel and his men.

All the pioneers had a heart-rending time building those far northern American air bases; so many obstacles had to be overcome. They started from scratch, in a wilderness of ice. Every steel mat laid on the ice for runways, every tank for gas, every crumb to eat, had to be brought in by ship and plane in summer, by air alone in winter. For months, in many places, there were no hangars, but flight crews ferrying bombers eastward to Europe still had to arrive and leave on schedule. The maintenance and repair work on planes still had to be done; lost men rescued; the gas tanks sunk in the snow and ice; the towers erected; the paraphernalia of mechanized life set up.

In the earliest days there was not even a post exchange, and when I was at Goose Bay, the structure was just being built. Today, however, the boys have running water and toilets in their barracks — barracks steamily





THE ARCTIC'S LONG SHADOWS AT HIGH NOON. *(BELOW)* "BLUE NOSE" COL. BERNT BALCHEN

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THOUSANDS OF WAR BOUND PLANES WERE SERVICED AT GOOSE BAY'S SOLE "NOSE HANGAR"



FUSELAGE AND WINGS OF ARRIVING PLANES MUST BE PROTECTED FROM FROST WITH TARPS



overheated to compensate for outside blizzards. Planes now are heated in the new hangars, but in pioneer times the engines were warmed while the planes stood out in the snow and the wind. This was done by lashing a tarpaulin over the engines and then blowing heat under them from specially built Stewart-Warner heaters, without which both life and flying in the Arctic would be almost impossible. Another method was to shove the nose of a ship inside a temporary building where repairs could be made with somewhat less discomfort.

The linesmen and communications men, too, had a job to do, which demanded heroism — the setting up of poles and towers despite hundred-mile-an-hour winds and flying ice particles that sting like angry hornets.

Goose Bay, Labrador

I remembered huddling miserably in a Liberator Express, bound for Goose Bay, in a world of forty below zero, and wondering at the nonchalance of the crew. It was a hop of some 800 miles between bases, scheduled for the dim hours of the brief, northern day. There had been no hangar from which to depart; the cold motors lagged; every molecule in the great machine seemed to be congealed in ice. But slowly we had gained altitude and levelled off in fog with no visibility above or below.

Those Arctic fogs are unbelievably thick; *pea soup* is the only name for them. They are particularly dense in the air above the lower end of Davis Strait, the body of water flowing between the southern tip of Greenland and the coast of Labrador. Down through the Strait from icebergs and

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DURING GOOSE BAY'S EARLY DAYS, VALIANT GROUND CREWS SERVICED THE ENDLESS FLOW OF PLANES OUT OF DOORS DESPITE 30°-BELOW BLIZZARDS

glaciers flows the frigid current. When it strikes the fringes of the much warmer Gulf Stream, dense vapors rise and becloud the skies to heights of thousands of feet. Such was the stuff that enveloped us as our Liberator plowed on toward Air Transport Command's base at Goose Bay.

As I sat shivering, despite my sheep-lined boots, pants, parka, and helmet, and rooted to the belly of the plane, I dozed to forget my discomfort. I awoke suddenly, bombarded by an ungodly noise as if bearings were being burned out of all four engines at once. For the moment, I could only hold my breath; then I realized it was ice being sheared off the wings by the deicer and pounding clamorously against the fuselage.

The hand on which I had slept was numb and almost frozen. As I was trying to bring it to life, I noticed that the mist around the outside of the plane was red with flames. I had often seen fire trailing for a foot or so behind a plane's exhausts, but now flames fully four feet long were flowing from every engine. Concerned, I made my way forward to the crew's quarters, only to find that incomparable

COL. A. D. SMITH GUIDED SUCCESSFUL OPERATIONS AT GOOSE BAY THROUGH TRYING DAYS



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OPERATIONS OFFICE; ARCTIC MORNING AT NINE O'CLOCK. *(BELOW)* "SNO-GO" CLEARS RUNWAY OF DRIFTS CREATED BY WINTER WINDS AND BLIZZARDS



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pilot, Chuck O'Connor, and his crew enjoying a thermos bottle of coffee and completely unconcerned. I should have had more faith in Chuck. All that had mystified me was daily routine for these airmen. They explained the huge flames; a rich mixture of gas and full throttle to speed above and out of icing conditions.

It is at night that the airports of the Arctic hum feverishly. In winter sundown comes at three in the afternoon. Plane crews bound for Europe and America meet at a far north air base to swap stories and reports while their machines are being serviced. The men rush out eagerly to welcome newcomers to their base. There may be a blinding snowstorm; still, the planes come in. First is heard the droning of motors in a sky that eyes can't penetrate, then the shape of the plane looms suddenly. Ground crew and mechanics appear from nowhere. The driver of the mail truck has its door open before the crew can disembark, to seize the precious letters.

It is a magnificent sight to see these great four-engined transports take off with the convoys of fighter planes that they guide across the ocean, just as they do from Natal to Ascension to the Gold Coast. But on this northern route they must fight snow and sleet and winds. The transport navigator plots the course and the fighter pilots need only follow. Almost always they make the trip safely. When one does fall behind, the convoy goes on; but radio informs the nearest base and a rescue plane departs on the search.

There have been hairbreadth escapes, and some rescue planes lost. I recall talking one night to a boy who especially wanted his picture taken for the folks back in the states. "You'll send it home for me now, sure?" he asked.



"SUITS, FLYING WINTER, PARKA TYPE." CAPTS. EVERETT W. LYTLE AND W. W. HOWARD



WINTER FLYING IS BUT ROUTINE SCHEDULE TO THESE FOUR-ENGINED ATC TRANSPORTS



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Arthur W. Baum, *Sat. Eve. Post* Editor, and Capt. "Wild Bill" Ford wish good luck to Capt. J. G. Moe and CMA's Capt. J. Wade, about to depart on rescue mission.



"I'm not scared," he reassured himself, "but sometime soon, perhaps, I won't be coming back."

He was briefed to make a rescue search the next morning and went to bed at 6:30 for an early start. I took his picture in the strange light of the following dawn and he went up in that little plane of his, carrying skis, to hunt for the stranded comrades. He was never heard from again. Had some inner feeling told him a secret withheld from the rest of us?

The experience of Chuck O'Connor, seasoned American Airlines pilot before he was called to fly ATC planes, was one that happens now and then to Arctic fliers. O'Connor was pilot of an ATC transport plane loaded with twenty invalid soldiers whom he was flying to a hospital in the states. The report came through that O'Connor's big C-87 was missing. Rescue planes were sent out, but came back unsuccessful in their search. There was not a trace to be found in the vast expanses of snow and ice. Radio messages were sent crackling over the white wastes of Labrador, but there was no answer. Then, after five bitterly cold days and nights of constant search, one of the planes heard a faint radio call. It was so feeble that the rescue ship realized instantly it came from nearly exhausted batteries and redoubled efforts would be necessary if the lost men were to be found before the call died out altogether. The search was accelerated, and other planes flew out over that Godforsaken winter wilderness in the night, hoping for a glimpse of a tiny campfire. After the faint radio signals, they knew somebody in the O'Connor party was alive, but where?

Somehow, in a violent snowstorm

← GROUND CREW READIES RESCUE PLANE AT 5:00 A. M.

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CAPT. O. J. (CHUCK) O'CONNOR (CENTER LEFT), VETERAN PILOT, CHECKS IN AT OPERATIONS

Chuck had become lost and, as frequently happens in Arctic flying, the electrical disturbances in the atmosphere prevented radio contact with landing fields. He didn't know where he was, so naturally he couldn't send out his bearings. His gas was running low. The cabin was cold and the sick soldiers crowded together for warmth. Up in the cockpit the imperturbable O'Connor made his decision.

He warned all aboard to stand by for a crash landing, picked the snow-covered surface of one of the thousands of lakes in the wild and forbidding country east of Hudson Bay, and sent his huge ship ploughing into the deep snow. He made a landing such as few pilots would have attempted, bringing the transport down without injury to passengers or crew. It had always been said that Chuck was blessed with a sixth sense. Now he hoped it was true.

"This is a helluva way to end up my flying career!" he thought as he cut the switch.

The men clambered out of the plane. Weak though they were, Chuck put them to work at once. Two climbed the nearest hill to take observations; two more went to look for game; others cut wood, built a rough shelter, and tried to operate the emergency radio. Food was a problem. They had but two cans, one of tuna fish and the other of chicken. So that each man would receive an equal share, Chuck decided to make a fish broth. Afterwards he admitted he never tasted anything quite so bad, but if the others felt that way, they didn't show it, for every drop disappeared. When only the chicken was left, Chuck found his luck was still holding, for he spotted a ptarmigan and killed it with one shot from his pistol.

"What this bird eats," Chuck reasoned, "may be our diet for perhaps two years."

He opened the bird's crop and examined its contents, finding berries which he knew must be somewhere within reasonable distance. He sent some of his men on a search for them. Tracks of a snowshoe rabbit were discovered and two of the party asked Chuck for permission to snare the animals. When the short Arctic day drew to its close and the lads had not come in, O'Connor sent a searching party to look for them. The lost hunters were found squatting in the snow beside a hole that no self-respecting rabbit had used or would ever use. They had been there half-frozen all day, snare in hand, and now were perfectly willing to admit they knew more about baiting their native Brooklyn "Bums" than hunting rabbits near the Arctic Circle.

Finally when the last of the food was gone and the makeshift radio was dying, out of the sky which had been so barren of life for five long days came planes dropping food and supplies—stoves, a radio, even books. The strain on Chuck of maintaining the morale of his crew and that of the sick passengers was now abated. Now they were certain of rescue.

But it was three weeks before they could dig a runway over the snow-covered lake long enough to permit the landing of a small ship. In the course of those twenty-one days all the men worked desperately. With a plentiful supply of food, and with warmth from blankets and the little stoves, not only were they comfortable, but actually the sick got well and most of them put

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EACH PLANE CARRIES ITS OWN PROTECTIVE TARPAULIN. FLIGHT CREW MEMBERS IN THE ARCTIC WEAR ELECTRICALLY HEATED FLYING SUITS UNDER JACKETS

on weight. Even the man who was suffering from tuberculosis was declared to have greatly improved. With the arrival of a plane carrying a baby bulldozer, short work was made of the remaining snow and a larger airstrip was cleared for the take-off of Chuck's big C-87, which ultimately flew them out to safety. The men decided to name both their frigid, isolated camp and Chuck's Liberator, *Lac O'Connor*. That was in the winter of 1942. In my recent travels across Africa I saw that plane, at Maiduguri, on the fringe of the Sahara, still in service.

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Many airmen in Greenland and Labrador came from the southern states. Never having known snow, they were curious to experience it and had asked for Arctic service. The tenderfoot in the far North usually has to learn his lessons the hard way. He is inclined to wear too many clothes. Old-timers know that the secret of keeping comfortably warm is loose clothing which permits the blood to circulate. A windproof jacket or parka serves to keep the cold air out and to retain the body heat.

Our boys are provided with the finest, most practicable clothing. But despite advice to the contrary, many persist in donning two or three suits of underwear, a couple of pairs of woolen pants, sweaters, and a jacket. Colonel Bernt Balchen told me he doesn't try to argue new men out of such practices. He lets them learn the facts of Arctic life in their own way, thus they are less apt to forget. They lose freedom of motion when all bundled up. It requires too great an effort to work in excessive clothing, and perspiration is inevitable. This evaporates, making them colder than ever.

"After they've shivered awhile," Colonel Balchen said, "they don't have to be reminded how to dress the next time."

The boys cuss out the cold but they joke about it, too, as is evidenced by the legend of the Kee-kee bird. This has been told in prose and rhyme from one end of our Arctic establishment to the other. One of the twelve stanzas in the Goose Bay version will indicate the general, albeit incomplete idea:



HEATED, PORTABLE TENTS ENABLE MAINTENANCE CREWS TO FUNCTION EVEN IN SUBZERO WEATHER

This bird looks just like a buzzard;
It's large, it's hideous, it's bold.
In the night, it circles the North Pole
Crying "Kee, Kee, Kee-rist but it's cold!"

Maintenance crews use small portable tents for engine repair and other jobs. The tents are made of canvas stretched over a

CATERPILLAR WITH GASOLINE TRAILER PLOWS THROUGH SNOWDRIFTS TO SERVICE TRANSPORTS



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INTERIOR LIBERATOR EXPRESS. THREE BAGS AT RIGHT CONTAIN DINGHIES



AT GOOSE BAY, AS EVERYWHERE, SERVICEMEN ARE EAGER FOR THE MAIL

light framework and can be set up around an engine. They are fastened down to keep the wind from blowing them away. Mechanics stand on a platform at engine height inside the tent. Portable gasoline heaters are brought into service, and the men can work in fair comfort and without the annoying fear of frost bitten fingers.

There is a considerable growth of Labrador fir and other timber around Goose Bay, where the airbase is located on a high, flat plateau between two rivers. The wood is very convenient for the fires which the boys build near their work tents. At all hours, men can be found crowded together for a few minutes around a crackling blaze to warm their toes and fingers before proceeding to the next job.

MAINTENANCE MEN PAUSE FROM THEIR WORK TO HUDDLE AROUND CRACKLING BONFIRE



I was amazed at the ability of ATC mechanics who, handicapped with heavy clothing and big mitts, can perform the most intricate operations on motors and other parts of planes. While working in the open, each would watch his companions' faces for the telltale white spot, about as big as a silver dollar, that indicated frostbite. A man's cheeks can start to freeze

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MAJ. H. L. PUTNAM CHECKS CARGO FOR GOOSE BAY. DURING DECEMBER, LABRADOR CHRISTMAS TREES WERE FLOWN TO TREELESS GREENLAND BASES

without his knowledge unless somebody tells him. Then he must hasten to the shelter to thaw.

During the time when the Goose Bay base was being established, a ship loaded with mess-hall equipment and food to carry the men through the winter months was torpedoed in the North Atlantic. There was no time to duplicate the shipment as ice would soon block the waters. Until the supplies could come in by plane, there was nothing to do but improvise. Stoves, washtubs, and kettles were contrived from empty gasoline drums; plates and other eating utensils were made from scraps of aluminum and tin. The boys ate so much canned beef and Spam they never wanted to see either again. They did have a "mechanical cow," a mixer that produced milk from milk powder and water.

Much later, the night arrived for the opening of a PX. The boys had been excitedly working on it for a long time. Maj. H. L. Putnam of Baton Rouge, La., the executive officer at the base, decided to let them have a real party for once, with no limit set on the amount of beer and cokes they might consume. His

FUEL SUPPLIES SHIPPED BY BOAT IN SUMMER ARE STORED IN AREAS SURROUNDING BASE



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LABRADOR STOPOVER FOR THESE FERRY PILOTS EN ROUTE TO ENGLAND. *(BELOW)* WITHIN HOURS, MECHANICS WILL INSTALL THESE NEW AIRCRAFT PARTS



theory was that after the novelty wore off, a normal level of consumption would come about by itself. Perhaps the theory was all right, but the fallacy lay in the fact there had been a storing up of appetites. On opening night the boys consumed so much of their supply of liquids they were forced to go on a ration basis the very next day. But all agreed it was worth it.

To the ATC men who had been stationed at this lonely post since its establishment, the opening of the PX symbolized the culmination of their pioneer work. The celebration was far more than just an occasion to break out a few cans of beer, though that helped. Americans and Canadians working together in a desolate part of the world had succeeded in the difficult construction of one of the greatest airports, with several runways over a mile long which could accommodate even the biggest bombers and transport planes.

We watched one of the giant four-motor ATC transports take off next morning, her outline clean and sharp against the shimmering white snow blanket.

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She rose and circled the flat tabletop on which the base was built, her metal gleaming in the crisp, brilliant sunlight. It was perhaps 20 below zero, yet we had little sense of cold, for the sun's rays were warm on our faces. Neither planes nor jeeps seemed to mind the weather. As we waited for the jeeps that were to take our small party 24 miles to Northwest River, a Hudson's Bay Company post, I carefully stowed my camera inside my parka. This was a precaution I had learned to take in the north, as camera shutters frequently freeze in Arctic temperatures.

We took three jeeps to insure towage should one of them get stuck in the snow. Sure enough, we did get into trouble twice, as most of the trip was through a three-foot blanket of snow. I rode with Maj. Morris Davidson, Flight Surgeon at our post, and Capt. Everett W. Lytle of Poteau, Okla. Also in the party were Capt. William (Wild Bill) Ford of Kansas City, Mo., Lieut. F. R. Hudson, and Lieut. Leonard N. Morris.

The factor, as the man in charge at the Hudson's Bay Company post is called, seemed delighted to meet some strangers and to renew acquaintance with Major Davidson. He took obvious if quiet pride in the fact that this post has been in continuous operation since 1743. The Hudson's Bay Company, he explained, is even older than that, dating back to 1670, when King Charles II granted a charter to the "Company of Gentlemen Adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay," and the company still operates its vast fur trade throughout Canada under the original charter.

R. G. Gillard, the factor, good-naturedly discussed the manpower shortage which was making itself felt even



AFTER EIGHTEEN MONTHS OF CHLORINATED WATER, BASE'S PX OPENS — COKES AND BEER!



A MOMENT OF CHEER, GOOD NEWS FROM HOME — 3,000 MILES AWAY. *(BELOW)* MESS HALL



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SKATING, FISHING AND HUNTING PROVIDE RECREATION, BUT SKIING IS REGULATION



INSULATED ROOT CELLAR PREVENTS FREEZING OF STORED VEGETABLES. *(BELOW)* TAP ROOM



in isolated Labrador. Native hunters and trappers have always made their living from their fur pelts, each year bringing in mink, beaver, silver and white fox, muskrat, and otter. But with the establishment of the Goose Bay air base, easy money and comfortable quarters had attracted most of the younger men, who were now on the payroll of either the Canadian or the American Air Forces. The fur trade was suffering as a result, but Factor Gillard's chief worry was whether the young hunters would ever be content to return again to their simple, hard-pressed way of life.

On our return to the base, Captain Lytle kept an eye open for ptarmigan, the white grouse of the north, which he said was more deliciously succulent than southern fried chicken. Coming from an Oklahoman, this was quite a concession. The other officers unstrapped their .45s and the hunt was on. The ptarmigan were amazingly tame, or perhaps the men were extraordinary hunters. Having no gun, I remained in the jeep, an onlooker. I found it difficult at first to distinguish the birds against the white snow, but after a while became accustomed to spotting a covey as it rose to fly a few feet above the ground. Everybody but me was in the hunt and acquiring a sizable bag of game. I just had to have a try, so I borrowed the major's .45 and demonstrated my own skill or luck by bringing down two.

It was midafternoon and growing dusk. One of the jeeps became snow bound and had to be towed, so we arrived at the base too late for mess. Now it was up to Captain Lytle and, rising magnificently to the occasion, he proved to be a first-rate chef. He plucked and cleaned the birds, made a corn meal batter, and fried them in

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deep fat. So delicious was the result that the officers immediately decided to organize another hunting party and try to scare up more Arctic game such as bear or caribou. But big game is more difficult to uncover, at least to the unpracticed hunter.

The ill-nurtured natives of Labrador must possess hidden physical stamina that enables them to live through the long winters. Those I saw around the base looked unhealthy, despite the best diet and shelter they had ever known. They are a hodge-podge of Eskimo, Indian, and Scotch, and interbreeding hasn't produced much in the way of beauty. Certainly our boys up there were of this opinion; they and the natives left each other strictly alone.

However, I gained tremendous respect for Canadians when opportunity came for me to visit the Canadian side of the base, the construction of which, of course, was a joint undertaking, having been financed partly with American and partly Canadian funds. Goose Bay may remain a great world airport in peacetime and it is not too fantastic to think of a fine new city development up there on the edge of nowhere. If it does, it will be because of Canadian enterprise and ability to cooperate. It was a Canadian, Eric Fry, who located this uniquely advantageous site while flying over ice-scarred Labrador in an amphibious plane. He had scarcely completed a later survey on foot when he saw two other flying boats circling overhead. They landed and out stepped a party of U. S. Air Forces explorers, bound on the same objective — to locate the best available site for a landing field and base on the transatlantic route. The bearded, rain-soaked Canadian, who at that moment looked more like a native pulp cutter than a government official, welcomed the Yanks and explained what he had found: a flat, sandy ledge, with plenty of room for runways, good drainage, ease of excavation and proximity to coastal waterways.

It was on July 4, 1941, that the Canadian and American explorers shook hands over their discovery. From that day forward, workers of both nations carved out the Goose Bay airport and



LAUNDRY DRIES ABOVE DOUBLE-DECKER IN STOVE-HEATED BARRACKS

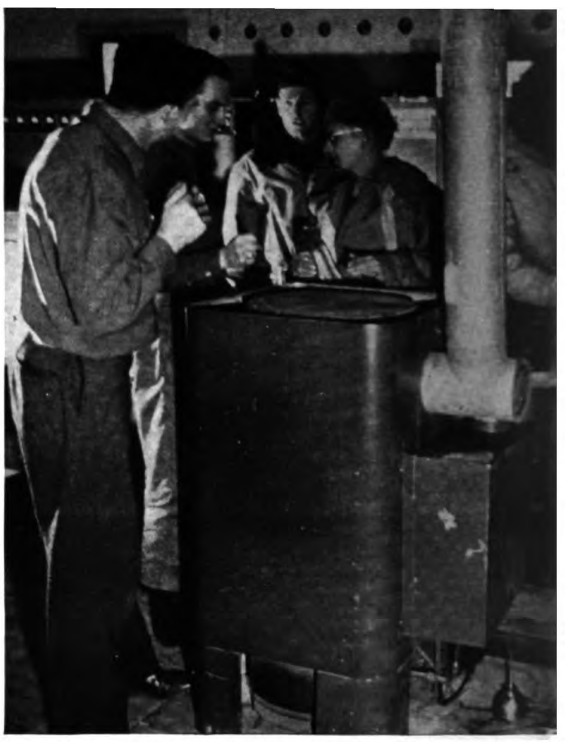


→ THIS NEVER-FREEZING SPRING SUPPLIES WATER FOR GOOSE BAY

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"LOSERS PUSH." *(BELOW)* "TALLEST TREE IN LABRADOR" FELLED FOR GOOSE BAY'S FLAGSTAFF



STANDARD TYPE OIL-BURNING STOVE FOR ARCTIC WARMTH



operated it in complete cooperation and harmony. A few details will give an idea of the scope of the development. It cost upward of $15,000,000 to build. Nine million feet of native lumber were cut and used for the development. In 24 hours Goose Bay can service over 100 aircraft, feed the crews, and send them on their way over the Great Circle route to Europe.

My visit to Goose Bay came toward the end of the feverish building phase, when, because of the short season during which boats could reach the bay, equipment was being unloaded 24 hours a day. Crews worked at night either by moonlight or the uncertain gleam of oil lanterns. A sawmill was one of the first buildings to go up. Bulldozers knocked over loosely rooted fir trees and then the sawmill went to work on them so fast that many a tree that had stood in the forest in the morning had been nailed into a building by night. The tallest of all, a 105-foot giant, was felled during my stay. It was hauled to the base and

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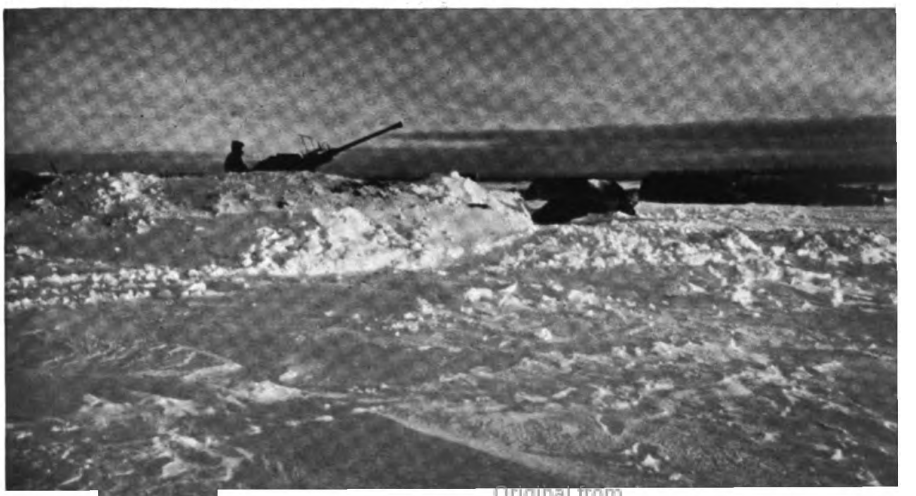
MEMBERS OF THE NEW BRUNSWICK RANGERS REGIMENT ON TREK FROM HAMILTON RIVER. (*BELOW*) MAJOR PUTNAM VISITS A CANADIAN CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

now serves as the American flagstaff.

There was more reason than winter cold for haste in completing the base. Goose Bay was just a descriptive name to me when I arrived there and I'm sure few Americans had ever heard of it. But it was no secret to Axis intelligence. An enemy submarine was seen and attacked in the bay just off the base on one occasion and constant vigil was kept against its return. Those were the days of Lord Haw-Haw of Berlin radio fame. Pioneers at the base had been amused one night to hear by shortwave his description of the post. They particularly enjoyed his tearful account of their exhausted food supplies and how they had been abandoned there to starve. Then they tuned Lord Haw-Haw out and went back to their corned beef and dehydrated vegetables. The bar at the Canadian officers' club hadn't been set up as yet, otherwise they would have toasted their "sympathetic" comic friend in the best brands of Scotch. When British or Canadians set up any



THE WATCH FOR ANTIAIRCRAFT CREWS IS FOUR HOURS ON AND FOUR HOURS OFF



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THESE DUGOUTS WERE CANADIAN SOLDIERS' BARRACKS DURING FIRST YEAR IN LABRADOR. *(BELOW)* CANADIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BASE'S DEFENSE



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form of military post, almost their first thought is given to the officers' club. It may be but a tar paper shack or a nearly demolished ruin, but a club they must have. Few Canadian officers really feel they have completed the day without polishing off a drink to the king's health. That is not to say they outdo our military men in capacity, but somehow a club appeals more strongly to a Briton's sense of propriety.

Hospitality is always extended to American officers in these pleasant establishments. One night at Goose Bay I was invited over to the Canadian side of the airport for an evening's entertainment at the officers' club, which at the time of my visit was a well-stocked and well-run place, despite the lack of a bar. This gave me the opportunity I had been looking for; I had been anxious to talk with the men who had the job of defending the base. Everywhere I had seen antiaircraft guns poking their noses out of sandbag emplacements and bren guns in the most unexpected places among the trees. I had noticed Canadian soldiers carrying their rifles even on their way to the little timber chapel they had hewn out for their Sunday services. RCAF officers and guards always carried sidearms. A particularly tough little weapon was the stabbing-knife, ground down from a broken bayonet. This Commando dagger was vicious, but the Canadians had to be prepared for enemy invaders.

They were for the most part, I discovered, hand-picked men, hardy woodsmen and farmers, with a light sprinkling of Cree Indians from Saskatchewan. The first platoon had been flown in to protect the installation from a German surprise attack. Bad flying weather developed and one plane crash-landed on the beach. The soldiers expected to be blown to kingdom come by their cargo of mortar bombs and machine gun bullets, but the ammunition had been so well stowed that the impact failed to explode it.

On my tour of the RCAF quarters, I was impressed by their health precautions. In laying out the barracks, extra space had been provided between buildings, to guard against any spread



LOGS FOR STOVE IN MAKESHIFT DUGOUT SHOWN IN PICTURE OPPOSITE PAGE



→ **Interior** of one of the many AA towers (page opposite) that surround Goose Bay. Earphones link towers for intercommunication.

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TESTING FIRE EXTINGUISHER NEAR ENTRANCE TO WORLD'S NORTHERNMOST RITZ CARLTON



RITZ CARLTON'S CENTRAL HEATING UNIT. *(BELOW)* ART EXHIBIT AND CONNOISSEUR



of epidemic disease, should a case develop. A modernly equipped hospital, complete with X-ray and surgical supplies, was well able to cope with disorders more serious than the occasional broken leg or arm inevitable to men engaged in strenuous work. The native populace was given equally good treatment. Eskimo children were brought into the hospital when necessary and kept there until strong enough to withstand the rigorous winter. Two native babies had been born in this hospital. When word comes of an illness too critical to permit moving the victim, a Canadian Army doctor is flown into the wilds to provide medical attention. During the winter of my visit, Flight Lieut. Al Cheesman of Port Arthur, Ont., flew sulfa drugs to one native encampment where 68 of the 78 inhabitants were down with flu. Huddled in skin tents, they were almost without food, as caribou and other large game had been scarce. Just where an army's obligation to the civilian population ends is always a question. But with Canadian as well as American medical officers, the rule is to help first and inquire later.

Also at the hospital I saw the only white women in Goose Bay—two nurses from Newfoundland, both of officer rank and serving in the RCAF. I asked them how they liked having 2,600 admirers between them. They smiled wryly, and one explained that far from an excess of suitors they had not even a single beau. Canadian and American soldier alike appointed himself protector of their decorum and kept them under constant vigil. Should one of them lose her heart to a soldier, she would have no opportunity to win a proposal as she could never see him alone. Here at Goose Bay, chivalry may have been redun-

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JEEPS ROLL ACROSS LABRADOR SNOW FIELD EN ROUTE NORTHWEST RIVER. PASSENGERS ON MEDICAL MISSION KEEP WARM IN HEAVY WINTER FLYING GEAR

dant, but certainly it was far from dead.

The day before I left Goose Bay we were notified that four medium bombers in need of minor repairs had left Greenland for our base. We waited vainly for further word. When the planes were long overdue, motors were warmed up, and a rescue plane prepared to take off on a search that was almost certainly hopeless. Just then one of the missing planes came in. A long-faced crew piled soberly out and headed for officers' quarters, to make their tragic report.

Shortly after the four planes left the Greenland base they had run into a violent blizzard. Although visibility was very low, they managed to stay within sight of each other. Suddenly, without warning and for no apparent reason, the lead ship began to drop lower and lower. It went into a spin and plummeted into the ocean. There was a moment of indecision among the rest of the planes. Should they go on, turn back, or attempt an impossible rescue in the storm?

Two planes swung about and headed back toward the Greenland base. The other continued on its original course, but soon became lost in the swirling snowstorm. The airmen in this ship did the only thing possible—they flew as low as they dared over the water until they sighted

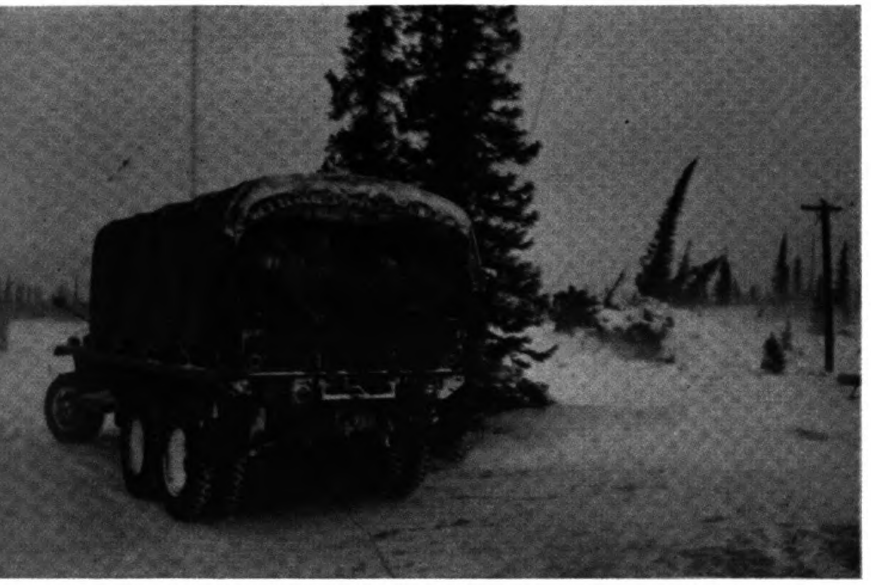
BOOTS, PANTS, AND PARKA, ALL SHEEPLINED, ARE HEAVY AND TOO CUMBERSOME FOR HIKING



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LIEUT. MILTON H. GRAY, (RIGHT) IN CHARGE OF ARMY AIRWAYS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM



MAINTENANCE LINESMEN. (BELOW) CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON HOSPITAL AT GOOSE BAY



the shore line, then followed it until they got their bearings. Finally, by the grace of Providence and good piloting, they made Goose Bay.

All night long those youngsters, scared by their own experience, and saddened by the loss of their comrades, sat in the billeting quarters waiting for news. They couldn't sleep. They went over and over every minute detail they could think of to try to determine the reason for the loss of the lead plane. It was a mystery never solved. The plane was never heard from, no trace of wreckage ever seen.

The following night I left for Greenland on a night flight. We were ordered to watch out for flares or even the faintest glimmer of light. For three hours we strained our eyes outward and downward into the blackness of the Arctic night, first from one side of the plane, then from the other. It was a bitter and frustrating experience. During the entire flight not a flicker of light was seen below. We landed in Greenland, eager for some word of the missing plane. But more bad news awaited us. The control officer, Capt. Robert E. Griffin, of Chicago, told us that one of the two returning planes had failed to arrive. Rescue planes from the base here scoured the flight lane between the two bases as well as for miles on both sides, but always they returned with discouraging reports.

The following spring, months later, men in a patrol plane flying 300 miles north of Goose Bay spotted some wreckage about eight miles inland. A small rescue plane went out and managed to land nearby. The wreck, which was badly burned, was the bomber that had attempted to return to its Greenland base. Beside it lay the bodies of three of the crew. They had

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not been burned, but had died of cold and starvation. In the clothing of one of the men a diary was found. It told part of the grim tale. The plane had lost its way. The pilot had crash-landed so successfully that not one of the five members of the crew had been hurt, and the ship, while damaged, had not caught fire.

In the morning they had built a snow hut. Two of the boys had taken rubber dinghies, part of the plane's equipment, and had paddled off in the icy water, in a valiant but foolhardy effort to reach Goose Bay. They were never seen nor heard from again.

The remaining three men had died of starvation. Yet each had a gun and ammunition and the diary mentioned that they had sighted a hundred seals not far off. There was plenty of firewood available. The diary did not explain why the wood had not been used. The burning of the plane was another mystery, for it had not caught fire in landing, and no mention of the fire was made in the diary.

The only conclusion the authorities could draw was that, while ably trained in flying, even under adverse conditions, those youngsters did not know the first rudiments of maintaining life in the wilds. Around them, apparently, was all they would need to sustain life for an indefinite period, yet they had not known how to make use of their treasures. From that time on every flier of the Arctic wastes has been given, and carries with him at all times, a booklet of instruction telling in simple terms just what to do in such emergencies.

All my experiences in Labrador and Greenland had taken place in the winter of 1942. I had left the north for the states just a few days before Christmas. Now, on my way home



ONLY WOMEN AT GOOSE BAY, LABRADOR, WERE THESE TWO BUSY RCAF NURSING SISTERS



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Mechanic thaws chilled fingers in warm air blown from portable gasoline heater, indispensable for the subzero maintenance work. (*below*) Labrador farewells.



again, after a much longer trip to other lands, I was looking down upon the same region. Now, however, there was no snow, and as we approached the coast of Labrador the forests of evergreen stretched away as far as the eye could see, no longer dark silhouettes against a background of glistening white.

I had hoped our plane might stop over at Goose Bay, even briefly, so that I could renew acquaintance with old friends still stationed there, but we flew straight over the base. Disappointment must have shown in my face, for the pilot promptly suggested we send a radiogram. As we flew over the airport, our radio flashed out to Major Putnam, somewhere below us: "Best wishes to you and all your boys—hope many of you can get home for a Christmas furlough—Dmitri".

The reference to the Christmas furlough, I knew, would take the Major back to the time of my visit. A number of the boys had then been granted leaves, but the problem of space on planes bound for the states was a serious one. Many of them had truly sweated out their chances of going home for a few days, and had sat up all night in operations office, hoping for a chance to get aboard a plane. Warm-hearted pilots had flown scores at a time, overloaded their planes to accomplish it, but every man got his furlough—although some had to celebrate Christmas a little late. It was during that same holiday season that ATC loaded planes with Christmas tree decorations, turkeys, Santa Claus masks and costumes, and thousands of gifts for the Arctic bases. It was then, too, that boys at Goose Bay, remembering that Greenland had no forests, cut Christmas trees and flew

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them to Greenland's remotest posts.

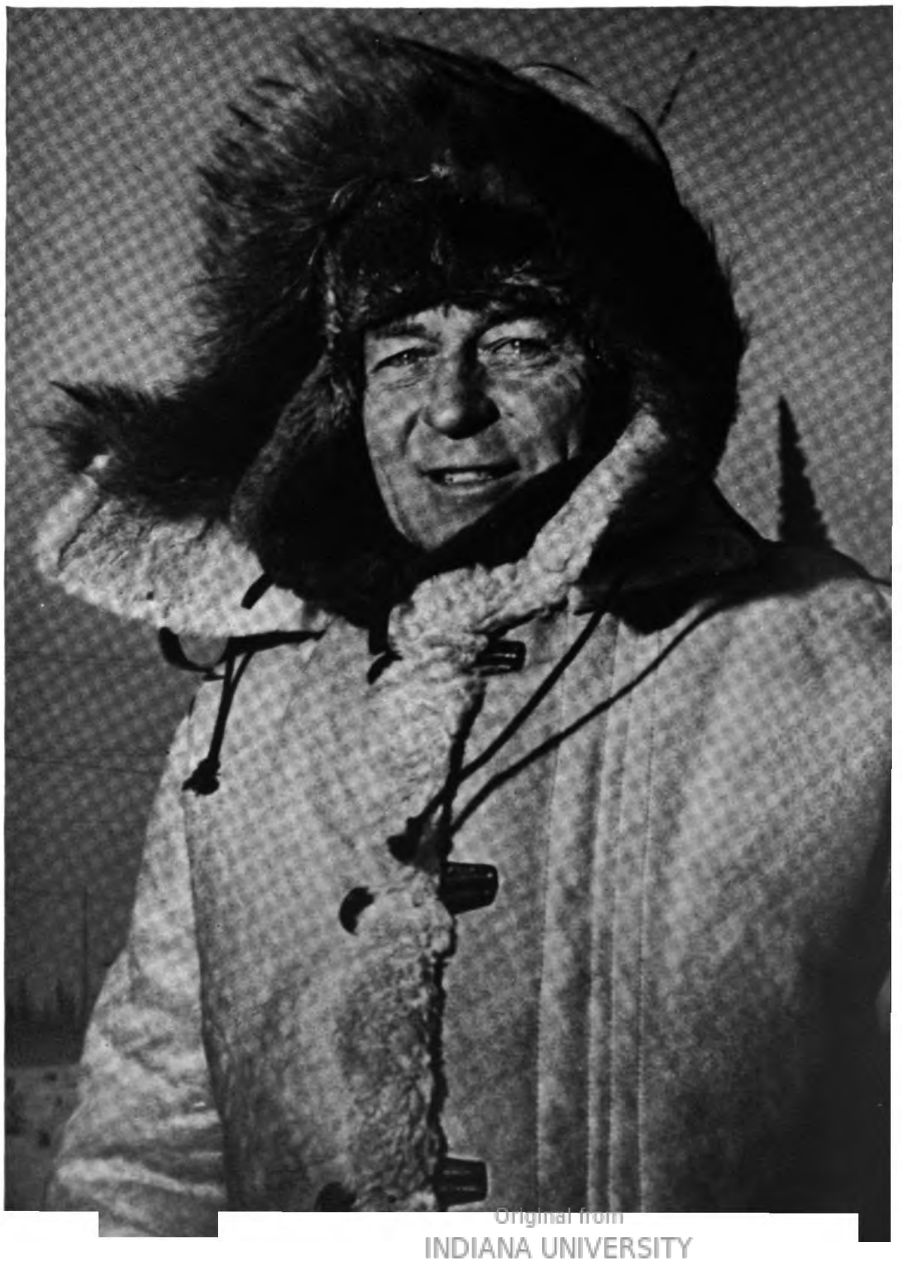
I recalled, also, my previous flight back from Greenland, with Chuck O'Connor piloting the plane. It had been bitterly cold on most of that 900-mile hop, and the only other passenger, Lieut. Col. William S. Carlson, and I nearly froze in the plane because of an inoperative heater. We remembered the three thermos bottles of hot coffee aboard, and struggled with one of them, but the top was frozen too solidly. Finally we broke the thing, but without spilling the coffee, and—Heaven be praised—it was still hot. The British love their tea, but to a half-frozen Yank airman a swallow of hot coffee is his nepenthe, the restorative substance of his normally blithe spirit.

We had started very early that December morning and it was still dark when, at nine in the morning, we ran into a thick fog bank, and the dreaded ice began to form on the plane's surfaces. The flames from the engine exhausts grew longer, and in their weird light we watched the ever-increasing ice. Only recently, O'Connor had explained to me the danger of climbing too steeply while attempting to fly out of a storm. Such action merely offered additional surfaces to pick up ice, the under sides of the wings. A big plane can pick up a ton of it in no time. Nevertheless, Chuck now seemed to be doing exactly what he had previously deprecated. I watched fearfully as the ice increased, but after one more steep climb we came out into clear skies at 18,000 feet, and from then on good weather was with us. Later, I learned that O'Connor had been demonstrating the consequence of ignoring such precautions to a pilot inexperienced in Arctic flying.

Now all this was but a memory, even



Lieut. Col. William S. Carlson (right) and Navigator Ed Porter with native Arctic mascot. (*below*) Maj. H. L. Putnam, genial Executive Officer of Goose Bay.



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THOUSANDS OF WARPLANES WERE FERRIED AND TONS OF VITAL MATÉRIEL WERE FLOWN ACROSS THIS BLEAK EXPANSE OF GREENLAND'S ARCTIC WILDERNESS

though a vivid one. During the flight from Iceland to Maine, the last long hop I was to make on my somewhat extensive flight, there was not a trace of fog; instead, flying conditions were ideal. Now I was returning to a world remote from the war, from the bomb-wrecked docks of Palermo, the torrid, sand-blown air bases of North Africa, the monsoon-drenched valleys of Assam, and the gaunt peaks of the Himalayas. Would the experiences shared with Dutch, and Sammie, and Pappy Wilkes, and Colonel Nero, and the scores of others fade as soon as I returned to my habitual way of life? There had been so many lonely men at the remote desert and jungle bases; so many brave boys taking their huge, overloaded transports over the Hump by day and night; there had been the intrepid pilots and crewmen of the IXth Bomber Command; and the wounded warriors in hospitals. There

LIB'S FLIGHT ENGINEER, BILL YONAK, INSPECTS FORMATION OF ICE ON WING SURFACES



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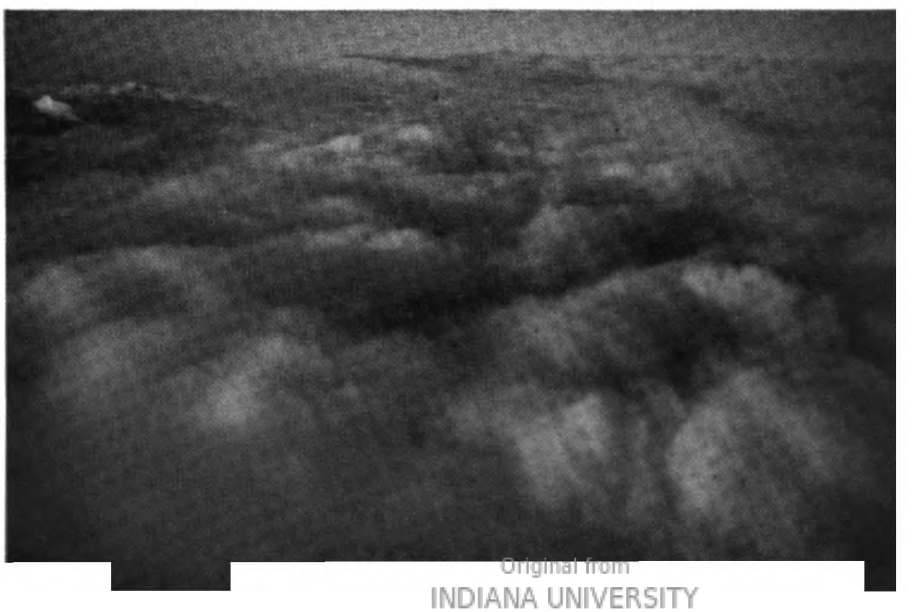
WINTER AND SUMMER, DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULES ARE MAINTAINED BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN ACROSS ATC'S NORTH ATLANTIC ROUTE

had been the hundreds upon hundreds of men of the Air Transport Command who, in the performance of previously undreamed-of feats, had made possible the accomplishments of all the others.

I had seen the wonderful mosaic of a great nation at war. I hoped that, with benefit of camera, I had been able to record faithfully and truly some small semblance of how men live, work, fight, and sometimes die for their country. If I had captured that story for families at home, I would have attained my purpose.

Our plane landed at the Presque Isle airport, finally came to a stop, and I stepped out. It was impossible to believe fully that once again I was standing on home soil. Next day there would be one more take-off—my last. One short flight and I would be back in New York. I would see my wife and the new home she had readied for me. As I

FOG BANKS ROLLING IN FROM THE ATLANTIC HOVER ABOVE LABRADOR'S FRIGID MAINLAND



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visualized the reunion, the hours that must pass until it would transpire seemed to stretch too interminably. Then, suddenly, I remembered the telephone. Of course!

But how to call and tell her that I was in Maine, only a few hours away. Presque Isle was still, if loosely, considered a secret base, and I presumed I could not mention it in a phone conversation. But maybe a telephone operator could. I got long-distance on the wire, said I wished to make a collect call, and gave the number. The operator repeated it and the wires buzzed.

There was a brief wait, then a voice saying: "I have a collect call for anyone at that number from Mr. Dmitri, in Presque Isle, Maine. Will you accept the charges?"

Then another voice—familiar and happy, "Will I. Indeed!"



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The Picture Journey of Ivan Dmitri

over 32,000 miles of
Air Transport Command Routes
through Jungle, Desert and Arctic



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